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STRESEMANN:

The Man and the Statesman

VON RHEINBABEN

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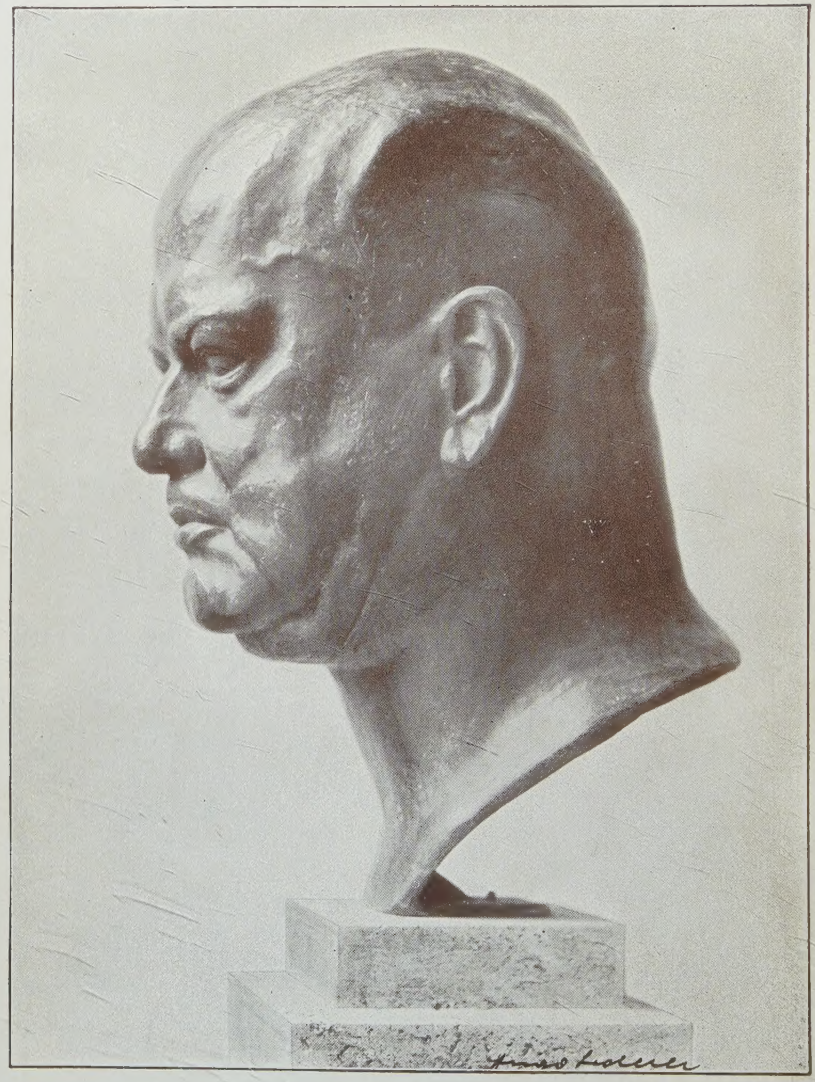
STRESEMANN

The Man and the Statesman



Bust of Stresemann by Hugo Lederer

STRESEMANN

The Man and the Statesman

by

ROCHUS, BARON VON RHEINBABEN

Translated from the German by
Cyrus Brooks and Hans Herzl

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK ✦ LONDON ✦ MCMXXIX

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INFLUENCES OF CHILDHOOD . .	1
II.	YEARS OF STUDY	19
III.	DRESDEN	33
IV.	REICHSTAG	62
V.	WAR POLITICS	91
VI.	REVOLUTION; FOUNDATION OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE'S PARTY; NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	151
VII.	PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY (1919-1923)	184
VIII.	IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR	207
IX.	FOREIGN MINISTER	240
X.	LOCARNO AND GENEVA	277
INDEX	. . . . .	315

16638

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Bust of Stresemann by Hugo Lederer	*frontispiece*
Stresemann as a student in Leipzig . .	34
As spokesman of the Students' Association to which he belonged in Berlin . . .	54
Stresemann	100
Stresemann when Imperial Chancellor in conversation with E. D. Morrell . .	220
In the garden of the Hotel Esplanade, Locarno, October, 1925: Dr. Kiep, Head of the Imperial Press Bureau, Herr von Schubert, Dr. Stresemann, Dr. Luther, Herr Kempner	238
Signing the Treaty of Locarno at the Foreign Office, London, December 1, 1925	258
A family group in the garden of the German Foreign Office	266
Signing of the Treaty with the Soviets in the Foreign Office, Berlin: Herr von Schubert, Dr. Gaus, Herr Wallroth, Herr von Dirksen, Dr. Stresemann, M. Krestinski (Russian Ambassador to Berlin), M. Bratmann-Brodowski, M. Jakubowitch	284
Stresemann	298

CHAPTER I

INFLUENCES OF CHILDHOOD

GUSTAV STRESEMANN was born on May 10th, 1878, the youngest child in the family of Ernst Stresemann. The family house was in the Koepenicker Strasse, in the southeast of Berlin, an old historical quarter where memories still survived of the homely Prussian town. This quarter, with the foundation of the German Empire, was gradually transformed into an uncultured city of colonists. It found its architectural expression in a mixture of the styles of all countries and periods.

The family led a laborious life with scant leisure for its members to cultivate sentimental ties. The only close and intimate relationship Stresemann had was with his mother. She alone tried to understand her youngest son's bent towards solitude and reflection. When, in his seventeenth year, she was taken from him, he wrote a series of poems, "In Memoriam," in which his mind constantly returned to the same

theme. His dearest hope was now finally disappointed, he would never be able to make up to her all she had done for him. He made this vow to himself:

"And should my head be crowned with glory's crown,
I'll consecrate to you that fair renown,
And back to you the days of fame I'll bring,
And give them you, who gave me everything." [1]

The first observations the child made as he grew to the age of independent thought were probably concerned with the trials of his parents in their hopeless fight for the maintenance of their standard of living. This is revealed in the thesis Stresemann wrote for his doctorate when a student at the university. Foolish persons have often tried to make fun of this thesis, though they have probably never read it. It deals with the development of the bottled beer trade in Berlin, and what the young author describes, apart from purely economic considerations—although one must often read between the lines to find it—is the struggle and defeat of part of the old Berlin

[1] *Auch wenn man schmückt mich mit dem Ruhmeskranz,*
Dann will ich dir ihn weihen voll und ganz,
Und dir ihn geben, die mir alles gab,
Von der ich alles doch empfangen hab'.

middle-class, that strongly cultured element which formed the foundation for Berlin's former fame as a city of theaters and critical philosophy. Just as the dwelling houses of old Berlin had to make way for the factories and offices of big business, so the independent middle class had to yield to great commercial concerns. When Stresemann describes how the wholesalers, whose function it was to bring the products of the breweries into the hands of the consumers, went to the wall, he is giving a section of the struggle now moving with ever increasing rapidity towards its close—the struggle of the independent middle class against big business.

In this thesis a personal note is audible. He speaks with bitterness of those circles on whose commercial good will and social understanding the fate of the middle class was more and more dependent. One is justified in assuming that the observations made at home, his experience of the defeat of the honestly struggling middle class, gave rise to his first reflections on justice and the meaning of life in general.

Those first impressions were decisive for the sense of social justice which has moved him throughout his political career, not only as a statesman thinking of the nation as a whole, but

as a man with a warm, human heart. Later on, as general secretary of industrial federations, he took pains to understand the mentality and win the heart of the working man, but he already knew from his own experience the trials of the middle class. In this way, he may be said, in the true sense of the word, to have risen from the people.

The growing boy was left to himself. Since no one watched over his reading, he read haphazard whatever books came into his hands. But it is worth noting that he did not intoxicate himself with the type of book appearing in masses at that period, which described the war of 1870, and, full of enthusiasm for the newly founded Reich, presented it as the feat of a few individual heroes. His preference was for the literature in which the idea of the Reich was shown in its springlike germination. The definite turn which he made later on towards liberalism, which seeks to understand the tendencies of its day and to cultivate the growing seeds of thought, is traceable to his early experience. He soon learnt that ideas take a long time to form and clarify before one can proceed to act on them, and that many springs have to combine their waters to form a river deep enough to float the ship of empire.

Stresemann's grandfather had been an active supporter of the ideas of 1848, that is to say, he had championed a united Germany, a powerful position abroad and greater freedom at home. It may be that Stresemann inherited from him an appreciation for such principles and an instinctive sensitiveness to coming events. The boy had no enthusiasm for the self-satisfied complacency of the time. His youthful imagination busied itself with the revolutionary years of which Geibel wrote:

"A night-wind bends the budding trees
And passes fresh and strong,
An old song sounds upon the breeze—
The German Kaiser's song." [2]

That earlier period had far more true self-reliance than the years in which Stresemann spent his boyhood, and doubtless much of that self-reliance entered into his innermost spirit. As a young deputy his speeches constantly strike a note reminiscent of the words of Herwegh's:

"Thou art the shepherd of the mighty herd of nations,

[2] *Durch tiefe Nacht ein Brausen zieht,*
Und beugt die knospenden Reiser,
Im Winde klingt ein altes Lied:
Das Lied vom deutschen Kaiser.

Thou art the hope of all earth's peoples,
Then cast thine anchor out!" [3]

This fervent confidence in his race may have been due to recollections of his reading during the years of youth. Knowing the strength of the roots, he believed in the strength of the tree. When a true conservative glances back over the past, he sees, in accordance with his pessimistic nature, the ideal state, which no longer exists, but which he endeavors vainly to resuscitate. The man of liberal outlook digs for the springs and explores the virgin earth for nascent truth. For him the spring of a nation's life is its most beautiful period. The years during which Stresemann set out in search of his fatherland's budding youth happened to be those in which a deep pessimism was spreading throughout Germany. They followed the failures of the first years of the Reich and of the cultural struggles of its foundation. If the German foreign minister is reproached to-day for his optimism, he can point to the far less justifiable optimism which filled his soul in that time of storm and stress for united Germany.

[3] *Du bist der Hirt der grossen Völkerherde,*
Du bist das grosse Hoffnungswolk der Erde,
Drum wirf den Anker aus!

Meanwhile, however, new and burning questions were calling for an answer. Young Stresemann was growing up inwardly isolated, absorbed in the ideas of 1848. But outside, these ideas had long been superseded by the conflict which raged round the "fourth estate," which was ever growing in strength. The social transformation by then was a virtually accomplished fact, but it was seeking new forms and a new embodiment. The struggles of Marx and Lassalle lay in the past. They had initiated the organization of the working class, had awakened in the workers a demand for their rights as men and women, and a proud consciousness of being the standard-bearers of a new age and new cultural values. To the middle class, however, all this appeared as rank revolution. The sense that a new era was about to dawn had not yet crossed the threshold of their consciousness. Even art, whose intuitions anticipate knowledge, had not yet found new forms of expression for the new age. The factories and railway stations had not yet expressed the genius of their own characteristic beauty. They were masquerading in the guise of medieval castles. The false romanticism of a Frederick William IV found renewed expression on its artistic side in William II's romanesque-byzantine style. The

soul of the machine had not yet been discovered. The film, the only medium which has so far expressed the strength and dynamic beauty of a machine, was still in its infancy. People saw the old order disappearing and ideals losing their grip, but they had not yet the strength to embrace the new. The poetry of the mail-coach was growing dim, while the glamour of the railroad was entering but slowly into people's hearts. And yet the lot of the worker, the lot of the dweller in large towns, who is seldom able to drink of the springs of nature, was seeking a new poetic expression.

A year before Stresemann was born, Arno Holz was writing:

"My youth was spent beside no woodland ways,
No child of nature taught my feet to climb,
I see the world revolving round its stays—
A child of cities, born to a new time.
Day in, day out, the fumes of chimneys blot
The heavens, and loud my heart cries to be free;
And yet, and yet, this have I ne'er forgot—
The golden word: This too is poetry." [4]

[4] *Denn nicht am Waldrand bin ich aufgewachsen*
Und kein Naturkind gab mir das Geleit,
Ich seh die Welt sich drehn um ihre Achsen
Als Kind der Grossstadt und der neuen Zeit.

Gerhart Hauptmann's dramas were vehemently criticized, and even Otto Erich Hartleben, one of the most modern writers of his time, saw in them nothing but naturalism. He wrote: "Naturalism in art rejects and mocks at all tradition, and inscribes on its banner: Nature and Truth!" Hartleben wished to blaze a path for the new literature. He recognized, as did Wilhelm Jordan in his epic letters, that literature has its universal, historic importance, that the Homeric poems are as significant in the world's history as the conquests of Alexander. But he did not perceive what it was that the German people needed most, namely, a means of bringing the spirit of the age, forging ahead with irresistible force, into harmony with the results of their historical development. These were the problems which presented themselves to the mind and spirit of the youth growing to manhood in the Koepenicker Strasse of old Berlin. How could he find a transition from what he had come to love in German history to what was destined to dominate the history of Germany and Europe in the future?

Tagaus, tagein umrollt vom Qualm der Essen,
War's oft mein Herz, das laut aufschlug und schrie,
Und dennoch, dennoch hab' ich nie vergessen
Das goldne Wort: Auch dies ist Poesie!

Even in externals Stresemann's early years had little of that spirit of comradeship with his schoolfellows, that sense of a common bond, which is impressed on schoolboys to-day very early in life by games and outdoor activities. Since becoming a member of the government, Stresemann has written of "that education from which I myself suffered as a youth, which puts a purely indoor education in place of outdoor activity, games and a love of nature. I shall always do my utmost to free us all from such narrow-mindedness."

Stresemann attended the Andreas Real-gymnasium in old Berlin. The pupils of that establishment were by no means recruited exclusively from those blessed with worldly goods, those for whom a career is made smooth by wealth and privilege from the cradle upward. Such people ignore only too easily the treasures of the spirit, even when they do not actually despise them. Instead of having to win these treasures by the exertion of all their energies, they obtain them without effort, by the pure chance of birth. Thus the subjects taught at the school became an experience, and learning a thing enforced by inward bent as well as outward necessity. The headmastership was held jointly by two exceptionally able teachers, who were humanists and

scholars. Both had been trained as preachers. One had been for years chaplain to the corps of Cadets and knew how to instill spiritual values into his pupils through the medium of beautiful form. He was a formalist in Goethe's sense, while the other influenced the boys by the sheer force of his intellect.

The *curriculum vitæ* submitted by Stresemann as a candidate for the leaving examination gives us some light on the experiences of his school-days. It is a remarkable document, for it shows us a pupil of the school regarding the *curriculum vitæ* not as an empty formality, but as a means of giving, to himself and his school, a true account of his inward progress.

For a time mathematics captured Stresemann's interest, but he admits that it would not have suited him in the long run. When reading this document, one is struck by the peculiar tendency to plastic as opposed to abstract thinking. He rejects grammar, but tells us that none the less he was able to translate well, that though he did not always grasp the meaning of a rule, he understood it by examples. This is a clear instance of that plastic mode of thought which imagines things without constructing them in detail. His three favorite subjects were literature, history and re-

ligion. He probably owed his taste for literature to that craving for solitude which had at one time such a hold on him. It was due primarily to the influence of a friend that while in the fifth form he worked systematically through the various periods of literature and acquainted himself with the masterpieces of each period. The same friend started him on his first adventures into poetical expression. The two of them used to translate poems by Moore, Longfellow and Tennyson, and afterwards compare and correct their respective translations. Stresemann took but little interest in medieval poetry, at that time one of the special subjects in his form. Just as in history he was mainly attracted by the post-Napoleonic period, so in literature he devoted himself chiefly to the modern writers who succeeded Goethe. Among the representatives of modern German poetry he was particularly drawn towards Freiligrath, Lenau and Uhland. He liked the first for his strange and richly colored lyrics and his political poems, such as "Rübezahl," in which we may discern the beginnings of lyric poetry with a social reference, which later became so rich. Lenau he liked above all for his moods of melancholy and for his "Faust," so rich in poetic beauty. But he was weaned from that taste

for melancholy, sentimental lyricism by the only writer of our time who has exercised a lasting influence on Stresemann: I mean Friedrich Spielhagen. In him he admired nearly everything: the blazing fire of his descriptions, the poetry of his diction, the, at times, almost overpowering wealth of his thought, the rich diversity of action, and that liberal attitude—using the word in its widest sense—that permeates all Spielhagen's work.

In foreign languages it was the actual reading that fascinated Stresemann most. In Latin he admired Sallust for the animation and vividness of his narrative, as he did the French writers, Guizot and Taine, for the clarity of their presentation. In French poetry he vastly preferred Voltaire's "Mahomet" to Racine's "Britannicus." On the other hand, he looked on Molière's splendid "Femmes savantes" as a model of all that a refined comedy should be. In the English poetry lesson only Shakespeare was read, first "Henry IV" and then "Macbeth." Generally he took a deep interest in the Shakespeare readings, and was induced to attend a course of lectures on the Shakespearean drama, given at the Humboldt Academy in Berlin. In prose he was secretly enraptured by the incomparably beautiful style

of Macaulay, and conceived a wish to continue the study of Macaulay's works.

His main interest, however, lay in the study of history, especially that of modern times. The *curriculum vitæ* characteristically notes: "It is true that I was most deeply interested, not by the external facts, but by their origins, traceable in the ideas of an entire period, together with the changeful fortunes of spiritual ideas; for instance, the great struggle between the papacy and imperial power in the middle ages, and between absolutism and constitutionalism at a later date. At the same time I never tired of reading about great personalities, men who, towering high above the mass of their contemporaries, crystallize the point of view of a whole epoch, and by their very names conjure up before us a bygone world. The romantic dreamer on a throne, who surrounded himself with Mohammedans and flung his book, 'De tribus impostoribus,' in the face of a world living in the darkest superstition—the king who, at the approach of death, had himself rowed out to sea in order that he might die within sight of the surrounding immensity; that Heinrich who consumed himself in a struggle against the might of the papacy, and his powerful adversary, dominated by the great idea of a world-ruling bishop of

Rome; in modern times, Frederick the Great, Joseph II and Napoleon. All such figures as compel admiration, however much one's conscience may rebel against it—those were my favorite characters, into whose minds I strove to enter, and whom I loved to follow along the tortuous paths of destiny."

The *curriculum vitæ* deserves our special attention, not merely because of its author, but as a document bearing on the cultural history of the time. Boys then did not regard their schooldays merely as a necessary evil, enabling them to pass certain examinations. They valued the time spent at school as one of the most important periods in their mental growth. The freedom in the mutual attitude of teachers and scholars is brought out in a confession of faith given by Stresemann in his *curriculum vitæ*: "I received my first stimulus to religious thinking while preparing for confirmation under the present General Superintendent, then Court Chaplain, Faber. We were only a handful of candidates for confirmation, so that Chaplain Faber was able to devote himself better to influencing individuals. This was made easier by the fact that he hardly ever accepted candidates who did not come from the higher schools. It is true I could not approve of this,

but I owed to it none the less a good deal of inspiration. I was often unable to follow the intellectual flights of that highly cultured man, but I derived from his instruction a deep influence upon mind and spirit. I was often reminded of the confirmation classes by the religious teaching in the sixth form, which also consisted mainly of religious addresses. Naturally the devotional aspect receded into the background when dogmatic questions were being discussed, but I think I may say that of all branches of the history of religion it was questions of dogma that awakened in me the keenest attention. I devoted to it much of my leisure time. I read Renan's *Life of Jesus* and some of David Friedrich Strauss's works, and followed with the keenest interest the proceedings of the XIXth German Protestant Convention, which has left an indelible impression on my mind. Time does not allow me to copy out the lengthy confession of faith contained in the first draft of my *curriculum vitæ,* but if I am to set down here in a few words what are the bases of my religious position, I could formulate them in some such way as this: I believe in God as the creator of the world; I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, inasmuch as the Divine nature has revealed itself through Him in the purest and sub-

limest form. His words and teachings appear to me to be the noblest and most glorious revelation of the Divine will: hence I regard them as the foundation of Christianity. If there be a Last Judgment, then I believe that our whole life, in so far as it represents the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the Divine will, will serve as the rule by which we shall be judged—not the membership of this or that religious community, or the adherence to any particular set of dogmas. I therefore consider the utmost possible toleration in all matters of faith to be absolutely essential."

This passage is followed by the assertion that toleration in matters of faith must cease where a people's national interests are in danger from ecclesiastical influences. And his profession of faith concludes, very modestly, with the following sentence: "But since, in this account of my life, I am to give a sketch of my development up to the present time, I can only state the views which I now regard as true, and shall, so far as I can judge at present, continue to uphold."

The reason why we have dealt in so much detail with the development during those early years, is that we find in them nearly all the seeds of his future life, and because that development had its focus entirely within him and not without.

In many quarters his rhetorical gift has been made a positive reproach against Stresemann, since it was considered a proof that he was out for meretricious effects. Whoever knows the man, knows also how little he gives away, or by his nature can give away, of his inmost being.

The *curriculum vitæ* closes with a retrospect of his past development, in the course of which he makes symbolic use of an incident which had happened to him: "When I had the good fortune a year ago to visit the sea again, I did not go down to it by the broad road to the beach, with its crowd of people, but set out to reach it by a woodland path. It was a difficult way; often I had to rest, sometimes I had to jump across ditches and to force my way where there was no path. But I could hear in the distance the glorious music of the breakers; the foliage above me grew thinner; a few steps more and I should see lying before me—the sea in its splendor and beauty. I had looked forward so much to this moment and yet —before turning my delighted eyes on the sea I looked back once more along the path I had come, almost to the point whence I had started.

"So now, when I can see the ocean of life extending before me, I turn back once more and survey the path by which I reached my goal."

CHAPTER II

YEARS OF STUDY

WHEN Stresemann left school, he did not clearly know what profession to take up. The career of a *privatdozent*[1] at one of the universities demanded considerable private means, and journalism was equally unremunerative unless a man were willing to take a subordinate position on the staff of a paper. So Stresemann renounced this career, giving as his reason—"I should never be able to subordinate my own opinion to another man's nor write anything contrary to my convictions." He turned to the study of literature and history, looking upon the former as the basis of his other studies, perhaps because it holds a mirror to the character of its period, and provides the sort of general knowledge from which more specialized interests may develop.

Stresemann became a student at the University of Berlin. He worked hard during his first years

[1] A lecturer who is paid no salary by the university, but receives fees from the students.

there, and the knowledge he gained was all the more lasting because it was based on the thorough grounding received at school. But what made those years significant in Stresemann's development was the fact that he overcame the tendency to solitude which had characterized his early youth, and plunged headlong into the bustle and gayety of student life. He learned to express and defend his opinions in speech and writing, and to join in the cheerful life of his fellow-students. After the end of his university course, Stresemann edited a series of student songs to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Burschenschaft [2] to which he had belonged in Leipzig. In an introduction to the volume, he said:

"There is a peculiar charm about German student life. It is unique and characteristically German; German, like our folk-songs, our raptures on moonlit nights, our tendency to melancholy. And it is something we, as Germans, have every reason to be proud of possessing. To belittle everything foreign and extol only what happens to be your own, is absurd chauvinism. The true patriot values highly the ingrained characteristics of his own nation and does his best to preserve

[2] A patriotic association of German students.—Tr.

them, while still appreciating the good qualities in others. And if the happy and exuberant poetry of our German student life is something other nations cannot feel or understand, that is all the more reason why we should love it. It has been handed down to us as a heritage of German nationality, and we ought to hold it sacred."

The natural bent of Stresemann's convictions was towards joining the originally Liberal Burschenschaft, where he hoped to find the patriotic enthusiasm and Liberal temper of the days when Germany was preparing for the foundation of the Empire. But by this time the Burschenschaften had undergone a change; they conceived their function as something external, and were far removed from the old spirit of national idealism. Hence he attached himself to the Reform Burschenschaften, founded by Konrad Küster and still in process of development, which went by the name of *Allgemeiner Deutscher Burschenschaftsverband* (General Union of German Students' Associations).

He was first a member of an association called "Neo-Germania" in Berlin. Regarding these associations Stresemann writes:

"The sound, original idea had become overgrown with error and many things were in need of

reform. So in those days we called ourselves Student-Reformers and strove to realize our ideals in our own persons and to be modern men, while on the other hand we were merry in the true sense of the word and strove for a lofty student-life. Hence our Union contained and still contains both a progressive and a conservative element. We cherish the old forms, we wear colored caps and ribbons, we can handle a cap and a rapier, we carouse, sing and shout for joy, often until the small hours of the morning. But at the same time we devote ourselves to serious scientific pursuits, we value people only by their characters, and not by the number of 'well-fought' duels and wasted terms, and we never forget that the kindly fate which permitted us, during the most beautiful time of our lives, to drink from the fountain of knowledge and to work freely at the formation of our minds and characters, has imposed on us duties as well as rights. Without presumption, we teach the young men who join our Union, to respect all honest convictions, to remember the social duties which education involves, and to think not of the coat a man wears, but of the heart that beats beneath it. In place of chauvinism, which is now widely prevalent, we set the good old love of country, in place of an external

'social' concept of honor we set the axiom that true honor reveals itself in sincerity of thought and feeling. We awaken in our young men that love of freedom which the average German student has generally lost; we teach them to uphold freedom of spirit and conscience, that choice treasure whose defense is the highest privilege of the student. That is how we understand Freedom, Honor, Fatherland; in that sense we champion the republican black, red and gold of our choice."

It goes without saying that the students' associations, through their whole attitude to life, were enthusiastic supporters of the black, white and red flag of the young Empire. But at the time these lines are being penned, the struggle turns, or should turn, on the question of how the memories connected with the black, white and red flag of the Reich are to be transplanted into a new age above which waves the black, red and gold flag of the Republic. In the same way a spiritual struggle was still going on at that time round the question of how to transplant the memory of the idealism of '48 into the Bismarckian Reich. To all appearances those memories were fast disappearing; the struggles which had preceded the foundation of the Reich were eclipsed by the unification effected by Bismarck. This was unfortunate for

the German people, who forgot all too soon how hardly acquired was the great heritage which had come down to the post-Bismarckian generation. Despite their enthusiasm for the united Empire and its institutions, the Reform Burchenschaften could not agree with those who, blindly submitting to the Cæsarism of the young Emperor, were willing to be led onward by him to "glorious times." At the very time when all the other student associations were largely occupied with externals, the "Reformers" were still striving to understand the basic ideas of their time. In their eyes the "March Rebels"[3] remained the great protagonists of an Imperial idea wedded to the cause of Liberty, and it was a tribute to their idealism when Stresemann, after vehement dis-

[3] *"March Rebellion"* is the name given to the Revolutionary movement of 1848 in the German States, which broke out mainly during March of that year and occasioned everywhere, at least temporarily, great constitutional and administrative changes. On the preceding February 24th the French Monarchy had fallen, and the excitement caused by that event in Berlin, led to street battles between the people and the Government troops, on March 18th, many of the former being killed. The Prussian King, in deference to popular opinion, paid homage to those who had died on the barricades. A rising in Baden was put down by the authorities, and an invasion of that Duchy from France, by a mixed force of French and German workmen, led by the poet Herwegh, fared no better. The issue, favorable to Prussia, of her war against Denmark (1848-1850) consolidated the position in an anti-Revolutionary sense, and the Revision of the Prussian Constitution, in 1850, annulled some of the gains of the March Rebellion.

sensions within the Reform Burchenschaft, laid a wreath with a black, red and gold ribbon on the grave of the March dead. It showed an acceptance of the responsibility that goes with citizenship, when, at the time when the fight was still raging between the factions in favor of Bismarck and those in favor of the young Emperor, Stresemann sided with the former. For in his speech of Jena, Bismarck had warned students against blindly entrusting the fate of their country to the Ministers of the day, and forgetting that the conduct of State business is the concern of every individual citizen.

Questions of political philosophy were touched upon in Stresemann's first important essay, "Thomas More and his Utopia."

On the other hand, problems arose with which Stresemann was familiar through the reading of his school days; the struggle of the workers for a position in the State, the question as to the meaning, value and trend of the new age, in which the workers were making themselves increasingly felt as an important political factor. Paul Lensch, subsequently well known as the editor of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* moved a resolution that the Burschenschaften should place themselves at the disposal of the working class, just as

they had once been the champions of a Liberal middle class in its struggle for recognition. Stresemann secured the defeat of the motion, for it would have conflicted with his individualist Liberalism to give unqualified support to a democratic mass movement of the Proletariat. At that time the working-class movement included Socialists, Syndicalists, Communists and Anarchists, and their aims were by no means clear. Lensch left the associations and became a Socialist editor, subsequently finding his way back to the middle class.

The struggle round the heritage of the past and the value of true spiritual freedom was most clearly marked in the sphere of religion. The discoveries in natural science, made during the Nineteenth Century, exercised an increasing influence on the shaping of religious life. Instead of the cloak of medieval mysticism under which Protestantism had sheltered after Luther's death, there had grown up a new power of discernment. Light, color, lightning, from being supernatural matters, had become the objects of scientific investigation; eternity was being replaced by knowledge, immutability by motion. Darwinism had set the pace for a sound and optimistic theory of evolution, and men of liberal outlook sought for the same quality

in religion. But at the same time, an anti-Semitic type of orthodoxy had gained ground in the Protestant Church, under the leadership of Stoecker and other ecclesiastical politicians, who were detested by Bismarck. This tendency was all the less welcome because it lacked the culture of the Catholic Church. In an essay, "Protestant Orthodoxy," which Stresemann wrote in 1898, he says: "For centuries the Roman Church has had her Pope at Rome, representing infallible authority on questions of Faith, to whom the end of the Nineteenth Century accorded Infallibility in an official sense also. The Protestant Church has chosen Luther's doctrine as her Papal authority. Luther himself did not regard doctrine as something fixed for all time; for if the body of ecclesiastical doctrine had been a crucial thing to the Church, then Luther would have been an apostate, and the Pope would have been right in launching his anathema against him."

In a series of essays Stresemann, still a student, attacked the intolerance of Protestant Orthodoxy. "We do not wish to fight against the Faith of Catholicism," he exclaims, "nor against the dogmas of the Protestant State Church, but against the intolerance and heresy-hunting which constitute the essence of both Ultramontanism and Or-

thodoxy. What matters is not that new Protestant churches should be consecrated with outward pomp and military display, with drum and bugle, but that the spirit of love and toleration should find sanctuary in them. We can only wage the fight against Ultramontanism, if we know ourselves to be free from any sort of spiritual kinship with what it stands for."

A host of articles prove how thoroughly Stresemann went into religious questions at that time, and he has since expressed his agreement with the conclusions reached in his youth, believing that Christianity departs from its vocation when it ceases to be filled with the spirit of love and mutual understanding, the spirit of inward seeking after the things that matter. Led by his convictions, Stresemann approached the standpoint of Freemasonry twenty years before he joined a lodge. He recognized freely and of his own conviction that devotion to the corporate life of the people and to the idea of humanity is the essential characteristic of a Christian. If you respect your own freedom, you will come to respect the freedom of others. If you realize yourself as a member of the human race aspiring to the Light, you will venerate those who have worked in the past or are working to-day to build the temple of hu-

manity. Thus Stresemann writes in his essay, "Masonry and the Uplifting of Humanity": "Men should not confine their attention to themselves, regarding themselves as isolated individuals, detached from the community, nor as tiny, unimportant cogs in a great machine to which the existence of those tiny parts is of no importance. But every moment, in thought and action, a man should be inspired by the conviction that he has a mission to fulfil on earth, that strength has been given to him as to every one, even the least, to ennoble and perfect the structure of humanity, and that it is his duty to play his part."

While engaged in these serious studies, Stresemann still found time to enjoy the students' life and take his share in it. This is proved by the numerous articles he wrote on student life for the *General German University Gazette,* of which for a time he was the editor. Also questions of contemporary politics exercised him, and he wrote numerous articles on political subjects. Several poems which strike the gently melancholy note of healthy youth are to be found in a periodical circulated in manuscript within a circle of intimate friends, under the title of "More Light."

In his second term Stresemann was elected chairman of his Burschenschaft, and during his last

term in this office it fell to the lot of his Association ("Suevia," of Leipzig) to nominate the chairman of the General Conference, and Stresemann was elected. This activity gave him practice, while still a student, in parliamentary debate, and provided him with the first opportunity to play a part in serious political life. But in addition to these aspects of student life, the demands of his examination called for an increasing concentration. It was due mainly to the influence of Dr. Kriel, Gerhart Hauptmann's friend, that the plan of Stresemann's life assumed more definite form and began to shape itself towards practical ends. National economy took a predominant place, and, as its leading exponent, Bücher [4] exercised a lasting influence upon the students.

It had been Stresemann's wish to take his doctor's degree with a big scientific thesis. But Bücher believed that those about to enter practical life should choose their thesis from their own practical experience of life, and not merely piece together a "scientific" thesis from the study of textbooks. Accordingly Stresemann produced the paper mentioned above, "The Development of the

[4] *Karl Bücher,* national economist, was appointed professor of Statistics and National Economy at Leipzig University, in 1892.

Bottled Beer Trade in Berlin, an Economic Investigation," which was duly published. This monograph belongs to that large class of books which might be collectively styled "The Decline of the Independent Middle Class." Nearly everything has been observed at first hand, and one can read between the lines a personal regret at the decline of the middle class, the decline of an old culture of the spirit, at a time when the comfortable beer-parlors had been replaced by garish "Beer Palaces." But that does not prevent him seeing things as they are. Stresemann does not spare the middle class; he reproaches them with having lagged behind in the march of progress, for instead of redoubling their efforts and keeping abreast of the age by making use of modern inventions, they invoked the aid of the State to maintain a position which they had no longer the strength to defend for themselves.

Though himself a member of the employing class, he describes working-class conditions, and breaks a lance in defense of the workers' rights. He approves a development which destroyed a small group in order to make living cheaper for the great mass of consumers.

But before this he had published two scientific papers of some importance. The one, which ap-

peared in the supplement of the Cologne "Allgemeine Zeitung," dealt with questions of currency; the other in the "Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft," on "Big stores, their origins, development and economic importance." This is, as it were, the complement to that on the "Bottled-Beer Trade." In the one he describes how a class was destroyed in the general economic development; in the other he draws a picture of the rise of the huge general store and proceeds to the question of the economic and social significance of the great retail businesses. The underlying premise is the same in both papers. That on the stores may have been prompted by the demand of the individual trades for State protection in the form of special taxes on the general stores.

Stresemann denies that taxes may be imposed as a penalty on the efficient and progressive to help those who are too feeble to advance. He points to the development of industry, which crushed a multitude of independent tradesmen, but was ultimately the cause of a rise to new prosperity by the whole nation. He voices the conviction, which he never ceased to hold, that in economic and political matters one can never arrest a development, but can only guide it into the right channels.

CHAPTER III

DRESDEN

SAXON industry cannot be represented like that of Western Germany, by names like Krupp and Thyssen: its chief characteristic is the prevalence of small—some of them very small—undertakings. At the beginning of the century there were in the Kingdom of Saxony 3,400 factories with 88,000 workers; which means that each factory employed on an average 235 hands. The formation of limited liability companies was by no means the rule there as it was in other industrial centers, and consequently the success of an undertaking entailed far more personal risk to the proprietors. It depended far more on the efficiency of individuals, on their capacity and drive. Eighty per cent of the factories had been established after 1871, and were mostly adapted to laborious "quality" work, demanding specially trained workers and a special attitude of the worker to his job. From the standpoint of the employer the workers were not mere "labor," to

the same extent as in the industrial centers of the West. Yet Saxony, with its 333 inhabitants to the square kilometer, was the most densely populated country in the world. In bulky works on political economy the special case of Saxony seldom received attention, for when discussing labor questions, the authors generally dealt with the conditions in the Rhineland, Westphalia, Lorraine and England.

Thus as a young doctor of political economy, Stresemann had to familiarize himself in practice with quite novel conditions, when, in 1901, he took over his first industrial post as Manager of the Association of German Chocolate Manufacturers.

The duties on raw cocoa and manufactured chocolate were such that the foreigner was able to import his manufactured chocolate at a lower rate than that at which the home manufacturer could produce the raw material. Consequently the German producer had to use all kinds of adulterants in order to be able to sell his article at the same price as the foreign article. This led to a movement on the part of the whole industry, which resulted in 1878 in the formation of the Association of German Chocolate Manufacturers. Hence Stresemann, from the outset, had to steep

Stresemann as a Student in Leipzig

himself in the great complex of questions relating to duties and the international exchange of goods. There was, moreover, the fact that the chocolate industry was at that time waging an uphill fight against the power of the Sugar Cartel, which forced all industries using sugar into a dependent position. Appeals to the authorities and campaigns in the press failed to have any effect. Stresemann induced the interested parties to establish a factory outside the Cartel, and even before the factory building had been completed, the Sugar Cartel acknowledged themselves beaten. Stresemann himself was elected to the board of the Genthin Sugar Factory, and when, in 1923, he became Imperial Chancellor, he was the only member of that board who could recall the establishment of the factory.

Nevertheless, the Association of German Chocolate Manufacturers was at that time of no economic importance. The importance of the Manager's post may be judged from the fact that all business was transacted in one small room, in which the manager's dignity was preserved by a folding-screen.

Stresemann soon saw that the weakness of his own Association was due to the same cause as the weakness of Saxon industry in general, namely,

the lack of organization. At that time people meant by industry, the group of industries combined in the Central Union. The Central Union of German Industries had been formed in 1876, to express a new economic idea in the Reich. Their aim was to set up a consistent German economic policy, and to overcome the crisis which followed the Franco-Prussian War, by demanding protection for German production. Stresemann placed that protective policy at the head of his program. It was to benefit agrarian and industrial production equally. In the same way the Central Union wished to lend its benevolent and active support to the Government in its social policy, while maintaining their right as industrialists to complete freedom of action.[1] With the growth of German industry, especially of those branches producing manufactured or semi-manufactured goods for export, many economists recognized that the protection of German production, as demanded by the Central Union, was no longer adequate. Naturally the Central Union included the great and powerful branches of industry primarily dependent on the home market—iron, spinning and sugar

[1] I am following here in the main the excellent account entitled: "Wirtschaftsentwicklung und Verbandsleben in 25 Jahren: Vorgeschichte der Gründung des Verbandes Sächsischer Industrieller."

and, later on, paper. Through the amalgamation of powerful groups within these industries, the Central Union was soon in a position to gain a decisive influence over the Government, an influence all the more important because the aims of the Central Union corresponded exactly with those of the Landowners' League. The Central Union also shared the views of the League on political questions, and formed the backbone of the old Conservative Government in the Empire, and more particularly in Prussia. Both "protected" the home market, by putting difficulties in the way of importing foreign raw materials. They thus acquired a monopoly and became able to impose standard prices on German industry.

Some of the interests of the finishing trades, which had their chief center in Saxony, were diametrically opposed to those of heavy industry in the Rhineland and Westphalia. Though the finishing trades, as described above, consisted of small concerns, their economic importance as a whole was equally great, and the number of workers' families they had to house and keep were not less than those supported by the heavy industry. But since the finishing and semi-finishing trades were very largely dependent on the foreign market and had to compete there, a cheap supply of

raw materials, especially coal, was of vital importance to them, and the protection of German production resolved itself for them into the protection of the means of obtaining raw materials. Evidently these trades were endangered if subjected to the dictation of the great iron and coal cartels, and competition on foreign markets could be rendered impossible.

Hence a league was founded in 1895 by members of the finishing and semi-finishing trades, to represent their interests. But the men at the head were weak; they failed to make clear to possible members the necessity for united action; they could not weld them together. The league consisted of a number of local branches which were not in effective touch with the central organization and were too weak individually to be able to exert pressure on Berlin.

The Industrial Association of the Kingdom of Saxony had been dissolved in 1855, and no organization of a similar nature had taken its place. Only two local groups survived, Dresden and Bautzen on the one hand, and Leipzig, Zwickau and Chemnitz on the other. All attempts to amalgamate these two groups had hitherto failed.

At this point Stresemann set to work. His task was to prove to manufacturers the fundamental

fact that, if they wished to survive, they would have to abandon their rivalries and coöperate. Nothing but coöperation could safeguard the interests of the individual concerns. Further he had to arouse the small manufacturers and impress on them that they must not leave the regulation of industrial conditions, and such questions as duties and taxes, to the governments at Dresden and Berlin, but must take an active share in the settlement of these vital questions. The great thing was to awaken in small manufacturers the feeling that strength would come through organization. Six months after entering upon his duties as Manager of the Union of German Chocolate Manufacturers, Stresemann accomplished what had baffled his predecessor: he united the two local groups, Dresden-Bautzen and Leipzig-Zwickau-Chemnitz, and on that basis founded the Association of Saxon Industrialists. Thirty-seven foundation members attended the inaugural meetings, and it had been no easy task to bring even that small number together. One firm was represented by the proprietor, his son and two confidential clerks, and similar means were taken to give the meeting a fairly imposing appearance. Stresemann himself became General Secretary of the Association. In that position, as the representative of Saxon

Industry, he drew the princely salary of 1,000 marks a year, payable quarterly. The fact that the Association grew in importance with a rapidity unusual even in the Germany of that time, and that Stresemann's own position was thereby progressively improved, was entirely due to his own efforts.

"The thing that matters most to a great industrial federation," said Dr. März, at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Association, "is not merely to tackle our daily problems and deal with matters of detail, important as they are, nor to safeguard our obvious interests —the most important thing is to realize the tendencies of contemporary development, to seize on the economic ideas which dominate our time and to find ways and means by which our specific aims can be reached. Such ideas as these were first presented by a few leaders to the mass of industrialists and then taken up by them. Helped forward by the energy and drive which an organization gains by pooling individual forces, the ideas have ended by raising the Association of Saxon Industrialists to a position of commanding importance."

Figures will best help us understand the progress made by the Association of Saxon Industrialists. At first their only office was a small room in

which the Association of German Chocolate Manufacturers transacted their business, their annual allowance was only 3,600 marks and their membership 180. After two years the membership topped the first thousand; after ten years it exceeded 5,000; and was then employing 500,000 workers. The methods by which Stresemann worked and to which the Association of Saxon Industrialists owed its success, were described by Kommerzienrat Friedrich, who had been able to follow the development of the Association from its beginnings, in a speech he made at the silver jubilee of the League of Industrialists.

"I should like to point out that in the sphere of economic politics the work accomplished by the Association of Saxon Industrialists under Stresemann's leadership, has inaugurated a new chapter—I might say: a new method or school in German economic organization. It is quite true that men like Bueck did not disdain the influence of Parliament, the press, public meetings and so forth. But they regarded these methods as secondary, compared with the personal influence they exerted, often in a masterly fashion, over State authorities. They considered the close personal relations which subsisted between representatives of Heavy Industry and Government offices, of the

first importance. Stresemann consciously struck out new paths, and with brilliant success, while retaining the old methods. He fostered systematic relations with the press and Parliament, and brought influence to bear on public opinion. People were soon speaking—and they had in mind the Association of Saxon Industrialists—of the 'semi-political associations of German Industry.' I must emphasize the fact that Dr. Stresemann's work in this field has served as a model for quite a number of associations, and that it was his method and his spirit that permeated the League of Industrialists, particularly in later years."

The question first presented itself: should Saxon industry found an independent organization, or should it take its place within the framework of the League of Industrialists. Stresemann decided on the latter course. The happy result was that the well-organized Saxon industry grew strong enough to obtain the leading position in the League, and Stresemann was elected to the governing body of the League of Industrialists. Soon after, the industrialists of Wurttemburg, South Germany and Thuringia formed associations of the same kind, following the Saxon example; and this was due to the efforts of young Stresemann.

With increased scope, the more deep-seated so-

cial and political problems which agitated industrial life were attacked. Saxony was, as it were, the home of industrial progress. Stresemann, with his strong historical sense, felt this was to be so. "It was here in Saxony," he said, "that Friedrich Liszt first propounded his ideas of a great German railway system. It was here that, in 1832, an Industrial Association for the Kingdom of Saxony was formed. This association petitioned the Government to establish consulates in every country, in order to enable Saxony to find markets for her goods; it pointed out that since we do not possess such mineral wealth as Rhenish Westphalia, we are dependent on our exports to foreign countries and that our Textile Industry would receive a vast impetus if it could make contacts in all parts of the world, but that the State must support it by developing means of transport."

Similar tasks had to be accomplished in Stresemann's time. It was not only economic considerations that made the work in Saxony interesting, not only the great industrial tasks which warmed his heart. He was placed at one of the local centers of the world's economic life. He felt that he was a weaver at the great loom of time. He had "the feeling of interacting with evolutionary forces

which have always moved the world, and which the world will always carry within itself." To a man endowed with insight, who looked for the meaning under dry statistics, the great political, historical and philosophic issues soon became apparent. The election propaganda of the Conservatives sought to damage industry by asserting that international capital was behind it, and that true Germans took little interest in such matters. But Saxon industry could only survive and feed its millions of workers by exploiting these international connections, and this revealed the hollowness of such propagandist attacks. "National" and "International" are in themselves empty catchwords which derive their significance from the meaning that individuals attach to them. "International," in the sense used by English business men and by German industrialists and merchants, means the capture of the world markets by German enterprise, and work for millions of fellow-Germans. Internationalism in that sense need surely fear no ethical comparison with the demands of national agriculture.

At the time when Stresemann's work began, German holdings of foreign securities were estimated at 8 to 9 milliards, by the Imperial Government even at 16 milliard marks. Germany

had become quite unable to feed its ever growing population by agricultural means, but had to go overseas and secure markets in order to have work at home. Otherwise she would lose hundreds of thousands of citizens to foreign countries by emigration. Whether the evolution from the agrarian to the industrial state was a thing to be welcomed, whether it was desirable that a constantly growing proletariat should congregate in towns, was beside the question. The need of the moment was to provide bread for the people and find a living for new millions of human beings within the national frontiers. The development from an agrarian to an industrial state was the effect of inevitable forces. In 1882 the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture was 46 per cent, in 1895 only 35 per cent. Granted that agriculture itself had become more intensive, yet the corresponding figures for industry increased at an ever growing rate. The ancient law came again into operation, by which a people that cannot find room on its own soil, thrusts out beyond its frontiers. Stresemann was but expressing his innermost feeling when again and again, he quoted the words of Bismarck at sight of the port of Hamburg: "You see me stirred and moved. Yes, this is a new time, this is an altogether new world."

Already the impressions and influences received in his youth had turned Stresemann towards liberalism. His experience of industrial life strengthened his conviction that nothing can survive unless it is constantly renewed, that no one can effectively serve the community, whether in the narrow limits of an industrial undertaking or in a wider sphere of life, unless he seeks for what is new and tries to foresee future developments. He realized that the times had changed, and Bismarck's policy had to be carried out only in the spirit, and not in the letter. I should say that few political speeches are delivered in Germany, in which Bismarck is not cited as an authority. Stresemann was no exception to the rule. But he did not quote Bismarck on questions which had meantime assumed a different aspect owing to changed conditions; he tried to extract the basic principles from Bismarck's thought and to solve the questions of the day by reference to general principles.

The problem confronting Germany radically changed during the decade following Bismarck's death. Each year there were 855,000 persons more to be fed, whereas the increase of population in England amounted to 379,000, in France to not more than 58,000. It was a task with which agri-

culture was no longer able to cope; the annual deficit in foodstuffs amounted to between two and two and a half milliards. Moreover, each year the importation of the raw materials needed by industry had the effect of further depressing the balance of trade. Hence it became necessary to restore that balance by work at home—in other words, to satisfy national needs by international trading. As Stresemann said at a later date, "We gradually became a people 70 million strong, and we were proud of being able to furnish that growing population with a standard of life far higher than they had known before. In order to keep going the vast machinery of our economic life, we had to bring into Germany every year from 900,000 to 1,100,000 seasonal workers, if all our requirements were to be met. In the course of our economic development we had become a nation of expanding wealth, but not in the unhealthy sense of a few individuals accumulating vast fortunes, whilst the mass of the people were in poverty. No. Our trade unions have themselves acknowledged that wages in Germany were always on the up grade, and we were proud of the fact that our Savings Bank deposits rose to above four times those of France or England, and equaled those of the United States. We had reached that position

by developing industry and commerce, and making them the chief economic supports of Germany. True, we had 17 millions engaged in agriculture, a number which happily did not decrease, and our land-workers knew how to wrest an increasing harvest from the stubborn soil. Nevertheless, we saw that the growth of the nation depended mainly on the great economic development, demonstrated as much by the statistics—which I need not go into now—of the growth of heavy industry, the iron and steel, as by our export figures."

Out of the six million German workers between one and one and a quarter million were working for export.

In order to exploit this knowledge politically, it was necessary to acquire power in the State. Industry could no longer leave the safeguard of its interests to the Government, since the Government was under the influence of the landowners. Knowing from experience that the Government, far from furthering its interests, hampered them by means of tariff duties, industry had to find its own way to power. So far as Saxony was concerned, people had to be taught the elementary truth that the industrial class of the population is entitled to its say in governing the State. The pride of the liberal minded citizen had to be

appealed to. It was in those days an almost unheard-of thing when Stresemann asserted that the achievements of the middle class were as important as the battles won by the aristocracy.

Stresemann believed, and tried to persuade the industrialists, that the best thought-out petitions were not worth half as much as a practical share in legislation. It is true that the government of the Kingdom of Saxony did not think the collaboration of industry of the least importance. Though 74.6 per cent of the population were engaged in industry and trade, and only 10.7 per cent in agriculture, the Government and the Diet did not even pretend to govern impartially in the interests of all classes. It was regarded as mere presumption when the association demanded for industry a representation proportionate to its strength in the First Chamber of the Diet. Stresemann proved by statistics, that if the views and principles of Herr Sahrer von Sahr auf Ehrenburg prevailed, Saxon industry would not be admitted to the First Chamber of the Diet before A.D. 2586. This article, which appeared in a periodical called "Sächsische Industrie," met with such approval that a second edition was called for. The First Chamber consisted of such princes of the Royal House as were of full age,

the burgomasters of eight Saxon towns, one representative each of the University of Leipzig, the Cathedral Chapters of Bautzen, Meissen and Wurzen, and the Evangelical Court Chaplains. In addition, there were the Superintendent of Leipzig, twenty-seven representatives of the "established" landowners (twelve of whom were life-members), deputies representing the owners of baronial and other large estates, ten owners of baronial estates appointed by the King, and five representatives of the mediatized territories and treaty domains, and as a last group, five members appointed by the King. Hence the only possibility for industry to be represented was among the five members appointed by the King, supposing industrialists were chosen to fill those places. Of this, however, there was no guarantee. To members of the First Chamber it seemed positively sacrilegious that middle class industrialists should wish to enter that august assembly. One speaker there exclaimed: "Once industry, trade and commerce gain the upper hand in the First Chamber of the Diet, the traditions of continuity and stability are doomed!" And in tones of dismay another asked: "Where will matters end if twenty or more gentlemen from trade and commerce are to be added to our numbers?"

Nevertheless the Government did not feel justified in wholly disregarding the wishes of the industrialists. What it offered, however, was a dangerous gift, which the Association was bound emphatically to reject, since it implied contempt for the importance of industry to the State and its economic life. The Government bill offered a total of five seats to industry, trade and commerce, the members to be appointed by the King for life.

A committee of the First Chamber finally put forward an amendment by which four representatives of trade and industry and one representative of commerce were to be selected by the King from fifteen candidates proposed by the chambers of Trade and Commerce. The State Government formally declared that this reform must not be regarded as the first of a series; it was the final reform of the First Chamber. But even this amendment, which was of course considered quite inadequate by the Association of Saxon Industrialists, did not obtain the necessary two-thirds majority in the First Chamber. The Government bill was passed in its original form. During the debate only a few isolated voices showed any sympathy with the needs of industry. In the Second Chamber a minority report had been

adopted, which demanded twelve freely elected representatives for the various branches of industry and commerce. This was rejected. All efforts to bring about a compromise failed. The first attempt at reform had been in vain. A second attempt, in 1910, was wrecked by the lethargy of the Government, who wished to leave the initiative to the First Chamber. Finally, in 1917, the Government of the day was prepared to admit to the First Chamber twelve persons engaged in industry, trade and commerce, five to be appointed by the King, five by the chambers of Trade and two by those of Commerce. The Committee of the First Chamber recommended the acceptance of the bill, but even in face of these proposals the Association persisted in their original demand. There was no time for this reform to become effective, for amid the whirlwind of the revolution the First Chamber itself disappeared.

The Second Chamber did not relish the intrusion of industry any more than the First. One of its members declared that it would not matter much if Saxon industry were ruined, since the farmers could get all the machines they needed just as well from foreign manufacturers. Nevertheless the reform of the Second Chamber went

through. The industrialists were loath to give to political affairs time which could ill be spared from their businesses, but, once their reluctance had been overcome, a sufficient number of their representatives were elected to the Second Chamber. Agriculture had always enjoyed a two-thirds majority, but not many years after Stresemann set to work, the Chamber was presided over by a Liberal. In the first electoral district of Dresden the Liberals inflicted a crushing defeat on the Conservatives, and that in a district which had always formerly been conservative. On the Board of the City Council, instead of holding two seats, the Liberals obtained a majority. The successes they gained on the Trade Tax, the Shipping Dues and other questions vital to industry and trade, confirmed the wisdom of the tactics employed by the Association and thenceforth kept alive an instinct for power and a healthy desire to develop their strength.

Industry did not commit the same mistake, however, as the League of Landowners, and its representatives, despite their special position, felt a responsibility towards the whole community. Consequently the Government recognized in time that the country had not fared so badly through the innovation. Indeed, the Association of

Saxon Industrialists actually championed a system of plural voting, which was distinctly to their disadvantage. No doubt what weighed more than anything with the Government, was the simple fact that industry had become a power henceforth to be reckoned with. Experts in official phraseology were able to enjoy the expressions used by Government representatives at meetings of the Association, for these reflected the strength of the Association. In 1902 the Government was not represented at all, in 1904 it viewed their endeavors "benevolently," in 1907 it saw in the Association a "valuable channel of vocational representation," and in 1910 the Minister of State, Count Vitzthum, expressed the following sentiments:

"I attach particular importance to the fostering of these personal relations with your Association, not only because it now includes some 4,500 industrial concerns, but also because by its sagacious, energetic and tactful leadership it had risen to be an acknowledged organ of our so widely ramified Saxon industry."

In November, 1906, Stresemann was elected to the Town Council of Dresden. He had little time, however, to exercise his mandate, for soon afterwards he was elected to the Reichstag.

As a Spokesman of the Students' Association to Which He Belonged in Berlin

Still, even on the Council he created some little stir, when he advocated that Socialist Councilors should be allowed to serve on committees. After his reception by the King, a Conservative newspaper wrote indignantly: "Stresemann offered the King the same hand with which he had but recently voted for the admission of Socialist Councilors."

While still a student he had dissociated himself from the National Liberal Party, which he thought too governmental. With the idealism of his early years he was disappointed to find the pure principles of Liberalism lost among questions of practice and tactics. But he continued to seek for the principles and the essence of Liberalism, and he found that faith in the value of personality flourishes best amid the activity of practical life. He saw that ideas do not suffer even if individuals have to sacrifice some of their aims and desires in the interests of a larger organization. He had joined the German Imperial National Liberal Federation, which had seceded from the National Liberal State Federation of the Kingdom of Saxony, when the latter approved the Three Classes Franchise, and he had taken an active part in electioneering work at Freiberg in 1903. At the same time he had

joined the National Social Party, where he believed he would be able to find the fulfillment of his ideals. Among its founders, in 1896, were Friedrich Naumann, Paul Göhre, Rudolf Sohm, Helmut von Gerlach and Martin Wenk. These men asserted the ethical commandment of altruism as a political ideal. Their precept was: love your country and your fellow-countrymen even as yourself! Their program could be summed up as power in foreign affairs, and social reforms at home. They believed that true nationalism entailed social reform, that by improving the material and spiritual condition of the working classes they were performing a patriotic duty, and serving the national ideal by winning the workers for the State. The concept of a People's Empire (Volkskaisertum) entered somewhat vaguely into all this. Despite its high aims the party never attained to prosperity and was dissolved in 1905, for it lacked the true instinct for power. Stresemann had left the party when, quite misjudging its functions, it had suddenly given unconditional support to a policy of Free Trade. Stresemann believed that a party so devoid of the instinct for power was useless. To be politically creative a party must be powerful. That point of view formed the speech which

Stresemann delivered on October 6th, 1906, at the Goslar Convention of the National Liberal Party, when he moved a resolution on behalf of the executive of the Liberal Party of Saxony. The matters dealt with were in themselves of no great importance, and when Freiherr von Stengel brought in his Imperial Finance Reforms, the National Liberal Party had voted for the tax on railway tickets and an increase of postage within city boundaries from 2 to 5 pfennigs. Stresemann used that as his starting-point for a general attack upon the party and its parliamentary representatives. He charged the party with being far too subservient to the Government in their policy, and with their failure to get in touch with and win over the masses; above all he accused them of not really desiring political power. According to the official minutes the speech ended with "loud and continued applause and some dissent." A little while before, there had been cries of "Sit down!" answered by emphatic shouts of "Hear, hear!" Deputy Bassermann, when the party was reproached for not taking a sufficiently strong stand against the maltreatment of soldiers, exclaimed: "That is positively disgraceful!" He managed, however, to master his agitation and replied in a calm and matter-of-fact way.

Stresemann, for his part, in his final reply said:

"I believe that the answer made to my remarks can only be explained by an erroneous interpretation of what I was trying to convey."

At all events, the result of his speech was, that the electoral district of Annaberg offered him a seat at the next Reichstag elections.

In December, 1906, the Reichstag was dissolved. The preceding Reichstag majority, made up of the Center Party, Social Democrats, Poles, Alsatians and Guelphs, had demanded that the supplementary vote for the troops fighting in South-West Africa should be reduced from 29 to 20 millions, and at the same time a reduction in the colonial forces. This was an interference with the Emperor's supreme power to command. Prince Bülow thought the authority of the State to be in danger, and dissolved the Reichstag, hoping to obtain from Conservatives and Liberals of all shades of opinion a new majority favorable to the Government's demands. The fight was conducted with the utmost bitterness. The election day was January 25th, 1907, and Cathedral-Chaplain Schädler openly declared what was at stake: "It was also on the 25th January that the Emperor Henry IV began his three days' peniten-

tial exercise in the Castle court of Canossa." Another clergyman, in the Rhineland, proclaimed from his pulpit that it was a sin to elect a Social Democrat, but a mortal sin to elect a National Liberal; and that God did not pardon mortal sins. Bebel himself admitted after the elections that twelve Social Democratic seats had only been won with the help of the Center party.

The main argument in Stresemann's election address was this: unfortunately, the public were not yet sufficiently aware that all states were parts of one economic whole, and until that fact was fully realized there would always be a danger of war. So long as other nations armed, however, Germany had no choice but to arm too, otherwise she would be, as it were, a military vacuum in the heart of Europe, and thus would bring war upon herself. The Colonies were necessary in order to draw off Germany's surplus population and to make Germany independent of the raw material of foreign counties. The colonial force was necessary to secure the Colonies. It would undoubtedly be a desirable thing for the nations to say: We will no longer wage war, for war destroys culture. And he cited a saying of Moltke's that even a victorious war may be a misfortune for a nation. But the

experiences gained in the preceding decades held out no hope of such a happy state of things arising in the near future. Characteristic for the year 1907 are his remarks about Austria and Italy: "Formerly perhaps we were unassailable, for the Triple Alliance still bound us firmly together, the Treaty with Russia still held, and all our interests were rooted in Europe. To-day that is no longer the case. Austria is a chaos of nationalities, each begrudging the others every square foot of ground—Germans, Czechs, Slovenes, Ruthenians and Poles. And there is Hungary, which perhaps one day will wrench itself free, as Norway did from Sweden. We cannot rely on such a state. About Italy Prince Bülow once said: 'A dancer must not be annoyed if his fair partner in the ball-room grants an extra dance to some other man,' but I believe Italy's extra dance has developed into a rather permanent relationship, and we must probably not count on Italy at all!"

On the question of home affairs Stresemann upheld the old Liberal principle—that it was the State's duty to look after the poor—and promised that he would try to help in winning the working classes for the State, so as to create a counterpoise to Ultramontane influence. The address

wound up with an appeal for liberty and the Fatherland.

The result of the election was a resounding victory for the Government parties, and after the second ballot on February 5th, 1907, Stresemann, at the early age of 29, was able to take his seat in the Reichstag.

During his stay in Dresden Stresemann was married to Käthe Kleefeld. Two sons were born of the marriage: Wolfgang and Joachim.

CHAPTER IV

REICHSTAG

BASSERMANN had congratulated him on the result of the election, and expressed the hope that in future old differences would be forgotten. Stresemann replied that he, too, was hopeful that their common labors in the cause of National Liberalism would smooth over past differences. Thus harmony was restored from the first between the party leader and the youngest deputy, and developed thenceforth into a friendly relationship, which grew closer with the passing years.

More even than the Conservative party which made its support of the army vote dependent on material concessions, the National Liberal party, faithful to its principles, supported the Government in all its anxieties concerning the army and navy. Yet that party was regarded with suspicion by the Government and the League of Landowners who, through the Prussian Parliament, exercised a preponderant influence over the

Imperial Government. The principles of freedom cherished by the National Liberal Imperial Federation remained an inalienable heritage of that section of the party which gathered round Bassermann.

He looked upon the Government, not as anointed by God, but as appointed by the people, and in a higher sense responsible to the people. Above all, Bassermann was concerned, sometimes to an almost exaggerated extent, to stress his pride as a member of the middle class, when dealing with ministers and the aristocracy. Hence in the Reichstag he was one of the few members who subjected the foreign policy of the Reich to a thorough and well-founded criticism. If only for that reason, he excited in the Reich a certain astonishment tempered with disapproval, for since the days of Bismarck foreign policy had been looked upon as the preserve of certain privileged circles. The National Liberals were not, as Stresemann reproached them with being, servile to the Government, but they sometimes sacrificed their convictions in the interests of that greater thing, the State, without detriment to their essential attitude toward State and Government. They remained the old Imperial party, which knew no compromise with the particularist spirit,

and they often opposed the Government, because they feared that if the Government were in the hands of some one party or caste, the State might become identified with sectional interests, and its authority be endangered. Even before the war Bassermann frequently expressed to Stresemann his anxiety regarding the Emperor. Bassermann, the leader of one of the parties most loyal to the Empire, never spoke to the Kaiser in his life. The tragedy of the party lay in the fact that it was so frequently misunderstood. People would not or could not see that opposition to the Government did not mean opposition to the State, and that there was nothing revolutionary in wishing to train *citizens* instead of training *subjects*. Round about 1907 it was still possible for National Liberal civil servants, who made no secret of their convictions, to be transferred as a punishment to the eastern provinces, because their loyalty to the State was suspected. During the 1907 elections Bülow said: "The most important tasks for myself and the majority of my fellow citizens are the national questions and the fight against Social Democracy." That statement is enough to show where the National Liberals differed from the governing class, even from so clear-thinking a man as Bülow. He was

fighting against Social Democracy, while the National Liberals were fighting, for the most part, to win the adhesion of the Social Democrats to the State. Any man not blinded by the tasks of the day, was bound to recognize that such idealism existed among the socialist workers, that often enough their idealism was greater than that of the middle class parties.

An impartial observer could not fail to recognize that if that idealism could be harmonized with the dry theory of the party, new political and economic results of world importance might follow. Stresemann pointed this out repeatedly. It is true that he reached his conclusion from other premises: namely, through the perception that all countries are linked together by world-economics, and he knew from experience that the progress of capital was strictly dependent on an international control of social policy. When reading through the speeches of these days one must always keep before one's mind the fact that in politics method and language, tactics and strategy, have changed since the World War, that we speak a different language to-day from the one we spoke before the great conflagration.

The first task in which the young deputy took part was that of helping to pass the Army Bill

presented by the Government. In championing colonial questions and the overseas prestige of the German Empire, Stresemann recaptured the romanticism of 1848, the most truly German ideal in the world, which had replaced the provincial idyll of the 19th century. Especially in those speeches, which dealt with the great colonial and economic questions of world importance, in the speeches delivered before societies of which Stresemann was the leading member, such as the Naval Association, the German-American Economic Union, the German-Bulgarian Society, the German Trainingships Association, we can hear repeated echoes of that saying of Herwegh: "Thou art the great People of the World's hope, therefore cast thou thine anchor!" It was always the naval and colonial questions which uplifted the German people from the depths of materialism, to higher endeavors. Nevertheless, the Colonies were to be a means and not an end. Just as the army was to serve for the preservation of peace, and only in case of need for the defense of the Empire, so in the interests of peace it was necessary to prevent army and navy from becoming ends in themselves and in this way endangering peace. With those thoughts in his mind, Stresemann said, in one of his speeches,

that Germany did not need an increased political power, and that it was sufficient if she administered the Colonies only as trustee for world trade. If really the principle of the open door were put into practice, and the civilized nations work peaceably together throughout the Dark Continent, "then," Stresemann avowed, "the Socialist thesis would be proved correct, that world economic policy has nothing to do with imperialistic world policy." We have come close to that train of thought at the present day, but for pre-war humanity it still lay in the remote distance.

There was then no League of Nations for the purpose of common cultural tasks, even in the most rudimentary form, and colonial politics were conducted upon purely imperialistic lines. Germany as an exporting country occupied an intermediate position between Britain and the United States.

She exported in 1912 goods to the value of 8,905 million marks, Britain to the value of 6,113 millions, to which in the case of Britain must be added 3,830 million worth of exports to her own colonies. If Germany, with her growing population, wished to obtain bread for the workers at home and land for her surplus population, she was compelled to tread the paths of imperialism,

seeing that every other avenue was closed to her. The Mannesmann incident had proved up to the hilt that only power and colonial territories of her own would ensure Germany's independence. If, however, a colonial policy was to be pursued, —that was Stresemann's view, which he repeatedly substantiated—then it must be pursued in a resolute spirit, then one must not shrink parsimoniously from any measures needed to make that policy productive and to establish it on a profitable basis.

The imperial expenditure grew to such an extent that three years after the so-called Imperial Finance Reform an additional outlay of 400 to 500 millions for the Empire was found necessary. To the German of to-day, groaning under the heavy burdens of the reparations payments, that sum appears ludicrously small. But at that time, when national exchequers pursued orderly and thrifty methods, such an increase justified the most serious misgivings. A way had to be found of obtaining the funds which Germany needed to carry out her cultural tasks and to satisfy the demands of security; otherwise she would forfeit the esteem and respect of other nations. Among the group of taxes presented by the Government in order to provide the necessary funds, the most

important were a retail monopoly in alcohol, taxes on beer, manufactured tobacco and wines, and, more important, a legacy duty, an estate duty in connection with a defense tax, and the rights of the State as legatee. The result of the struggle which followed was that the estate and legacy duties were dropped, but the stamp duty on securities was raised, a tax was imposed on dividends and share coupons, an increased stamp duty was charged on bills and a tax was levied on checks. That is to say, the taxes introduced bore almost exclusively on industry and trade, and the inheritance tax which affected property of all kinds, industry and agriculture alike, was suppressed.

The struggle around this Imperial Finance Reform was the most bitter political fight since the Kulturkampf.[1]

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[1] *Kulturkampf*.—The word, denoting struggle between the State and Ultramontanism, was first used by Rudolf Virchow, the famous pathologist, anthropologist and politician, in an election program written by him in 1873 for the Progressive party. The immediate cause of the struggle was the Prussian May-Laws, so-called, of that year, by which a much stricter State control was established over the training, ordination and discipline of the clergy (both Evangelical and Catholic, and partly also of other denominations). The system was completed by the laws of 1875 and 1876, dealing with the possessions of Communities and Dioceses. The Catholic Church offered very determined resistance to those enactments, and a Papal encyclical, of February 5th, 1875, even declared them null. The State replied by prohibiting religious Orders and Congregations with but a few exceptions, and discontinuing State grants to

Outwardly it appeared as a party crisis, but in reality it touched the whole economic and social structure, involving as it did the great question whether imperial legislation should deal justly with the actual social and economic situation, or whether in a partisan spirit it should intervene one-sidedly in favor of agriculture.

Stresemann summed up the problem, in a speech at the Berlin Sports Palace, as follows: "A process of a revolutionary nature has taken place in German economic life. How far we have traveled toward becoming a predominantly industrial state, is shown by the figures of the last vocational census. To-day industry, trade and commerce have become the determining factors in the life of Germany. The influence of the economic productivity of the nation is felt far beyond our frontiers. Goethe has said that the world-soul must penetrate our being, since it is our high calling to strive for preëminence in the world, with every fiber, with all the intensity of our economic energy. But our political and social tendencies are in marked contrast with such a development. Up to the present, legislation has

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the Catholic Church. In 1880 a change of policy set in, directed by the Ministers von Puttkamer and von Gossler, and by a series of laws passed between 1880 and 1887, peace between State and Church was restored in Prussia.

not reflected the transformation in our economic life. The established ownership of land controls our legislation. Industry is dependent on the favor of the sovereign in admitting a few individuals to the Upper House. Moreover, imperial legislation shows no desire to progress along the road of economic development, but regards it as political wisdom to strengthen the elements which hinder that development. If industry and trade say with Euphorion 'higher ever must I mount, higher ever must I cast my eyes,' the Government says with the anxious Helena: 'But steady, steady! be not over-rash!' Thus the nation's economic development is in permanent opposition to the legislative views dominant in the German Empire."

The question was, how to apportion the new taxes equitably. Industry did not oppose the taxation of share property as such, but it had to guard against share property being treated, for purposes of taxation, as something unimportant, if not indeed harmful, while agriculture was relieved, as a necessity to the State. Every shareholder, by owning a share, participates in the risk borne by the German economic structure and, with his money and his credit, helps to build up and to maintain that structure. A just apportion-

ment of taxation was demanded by Stresemann, for this reason, also, that one would never be able to win over the working class unless the State proved that it considered the interests of all sections of the people alike. During these struggles the Liberal-Conservative *bloc* broke up, for the Center sided with the Conservative-Agricultural interests, and Bülow fell.

The idea that it was necessary to enlist all classes of the German people who were interested in economic matters but would not follow the lead of the Landowners' League, for the great task of financial reform, gave rise to the plan of founding a league of employees and employers, within which all outstanding differences should be settled, but which would then proceed to influence the Government. The workers were expressly included in the Hansa League, so as not to repeat the mistakes of the National Union. In his great speech at the inauguration of the Dresden local group of the Hansa League, Stresemann called attention to the events that were then taking place:

"When the German National Union was founded, to effect the unification of Germany through spiritual channels with the coöperation of all classes, the workers were anxious to help,

and applied to the leaders of the National Union to be allowed to join. The first battle was then being fought for the souls of the German workers, the first attempt was being made to separate them as a class from the rest of the nation, and a serious mistake was made, I think, in refusing them admission. They were fobbed off with the ridiculous phrase that the workers were by right of birth honorary members of the National Union. We have paid a high price in the class-struggles that followed, for our refusal of that offer of coöperation."

Stresemann's special aim was to awaken a sense of the mutual interdependence of all classes. His aim was not "party politics," but a just economic policy, and he took care to emphasize that such a policy would not be directed against agriculture, but against the excessive greed of the League of Landowners. In his speech to the Hansa League, on September 1st, 1909, at Dresden, Stresemann gives the following account of the views which still prevailed regarding German industry: "Have we not heard in the Reichstag that all the mischief in the world is to be expected from speculative Big Capital? Herr Teodor Fritsch, the head of the Middle Class Association in the Kingdom of Saxony, bases all his op-

position to the Hansa League on that idea, simply because Big Capital is represented on that body. He says in the course of an article in the 'German Artisan': 'For thousands of years the trader has been practicing the art of influencing the ideas of his customers. He must know how to represent his own profit as the purchaser's benefit and intensify the art of persuasion to the pitch of confusing thought and hypnotizing the mind. So even at the present day the peddler fools the laborer's wife, as the Commercial Counsellor fools the Statesman!' Elsewhere he speaks of ramps on the Stock Exchange, and has the bad taste to put forward as types of German men of business a few failures who belong to industry, as though such people do not occur in other callings, people like Sternberg. He adds, 'All these people are to march under the same banner in the Hansa League. Would it not be better from the start to found a section for wreckers and pirates?' "

These views could only be combated by overcoming the aversion of trade and industry to political work. So long as in a Reichstag of 397 members, there were 106 landowners and only 21 industrialists, it was impossible in the nature of things to achieve fair legislation, industry and

trade could only be helped if they would help themselves.

The ideas that Stresemann had been among the first to propagate, had by that time become universal. Soon after its foundation the Hansa League had to weather the first serious storm. The Central Union of German Industry courted the League of Landowners, siding with them on questions of the Imperial Finance Reform, for fear of losing touch with them over common interests, above all on tariff questions. But that the Hansa League really represented Germany's economic interests and future needs is evident from the fact that in four months it gained 220,000 members, associations and corporations being counted only as single members. In order to provide a basis for comparison, it should be said that the League of Landowners only reached the figure of 300,000 members after being in existence ten years.

The success of this first attempt to give an organized expression to the new tendency in Germany's economic life showed how far it was instinctively recognized by all classes.

His success had proved the correctness of Stresemann's views in one direction, and he made it his task to win acceptance for his ideas in other

matters. Apart from the economic struggle, the fight to bring over the workers to the State had to be brought to an issue. In Conservative circles the view prevailed that they were following Bismarck's lead in opposing the demands of the working class with the utmost vigor. No doubt they had hoped to find an ally in Stresemann, for on his election one newspaper wrote that he had entered the Reichstag as successor to Beumer, that is to say: a deputy who belonged to the extreme right wing of industry, and that therefore his line of action was laid down beforehand.

For those times, when deputies were far from being the representatives of definite sectional and vocational interests, as they are to-day, such an assertion was astounding.

Stresemann, to the chagrin of his opponents, refuted that view in his first big Reichstag speech, on April 12th, 1907, when he dealt with the Home Office Vote. He declared that in his opinion it was both possible and necessary to bring about an understanding with the working class, by means of a national social policy. The hostility of the workers to the State could be overcome by a compromise. A majority among them did not dare to admit that Germany had the

best social policy, for then their whole theory would break down.

They asserted that the middle class was pauperizing the worker by keeping him just above actual starvation, but in a state of indigence. Nevertheless the struggle between the left wing of the workers' party and the Revisionists, who turned to the State and wanted power therein—a struggle based on the opposition between Bebel and Vollmar—was characteristic.

Among the compromises favored by Stresemann, which brought him bitter reproaches, particularly from the Central Union, was the conviction that the workers must not be deprived of the right of coalition. It was a natural consequence of his liberal principles, that men should be free to form groups and associations, provided these were not directed against the authority of the State. The right of coalition appeared to him as the Magna Charta of the working class. He endeavored to bring home to the employer the ethical motives implied in the readiness of the working class to make sacrifices for their ideas. Thus in an address to the Union for the Protection of Industry he once said: "Those are not the worst elements among the working class which have known how to subordinate their de-

sire for personal savings to the higher communal idea of the pooling of working class resources. If any moral is to be drawn from the workers' willingness to impose this sacrifice on themselves, it is this. Industrialists ought to show the same devotion and efficiency for their own organizations and their own political ideals, as the German working man has done, often in the face of persecution and difficulty. I have always attached great value to this idea of the freedom to organize and have made it the keystone of my social ideas, because I consider the pooling of forces for the overcoming of personal egotism to be the chief condition of a true sense of duty to the State."

Stresemann hoped that the workers would recognize through their Trades Unions, that they could only give effect to their political ideas through the State, just as they gave effect to economic ideas through the unions, and that in this way they would be led to practical coöperation in the State.

He clearly perceived that unless the employers strengthened their position and so produced a balance of forces, the Trades Unions might become a danger to them. Hence he strove to bring about such a balance. The Trades Unions grew

in strength to a degree which they themselves probably had scarcely anticipated. In 1891 their membership was only 277,659, in 1909, 1,832,667, and in 1913 the unions disposed of a capital of 65 million marks and of an annual income of 71 millions. Under these circumstances it seemed likely that the words of the Workers' Marseillaise would be accomplished. All the wheels stand still, when it is the "workers' will," unless the other side were similarly prepared.

On September 15th, 1905, at a conference at Bremen called to consider the conditions of the labor market, Stresemann delivered his very important address on "Societies for Compensation in the Event of Strikes." In the following year the Association of Saxon Industrialists for Compensation in the Event of Strikes, was founded, which later on began to admit non-Saxon concerns and was transformed into the German Union for the Protection of Industry. The latter, six years from its inception, comprised 3,000 firms, with an annual wage-bill of 245 million marks. Industry, as Stresemann once remarked, was faced with the alternative: "Reconciliation or conflict with those who as employees are pitted against their employers, into whose heads the idea of class hatred and class struggle has been

driven, so that they cannot see the interests they have in common, but look upon the employer only as an enemy whom they must overcome at all costs. We have here adopted the attitude which in my opinion is the only right one, the attitude which, if we consistently maintain it, will give us the assurance that we shall not be taken unawares when we are faced with unwarranted demands, I mean fair play for both sides, with due respect for the authority of the State.

"To put it more plainly, the workers must have the right to combine, but, equally, the employer must have the same right, and the rights of both must be protected."

Despite the strike compensation societies, the position remained one-sided, for, if the worker struck, he only lost his wages for the period of the strike and as soon as it was over could resume work on the same if not on better terms, whereas it might happen that the employer, owing to the seeming insecurity of his business, would lose valuable contracts and so be thrown back for years. The fact remains that the added strength given to the employers by the formation of strike compensation societies increased the risk of the Trades Unions in striking, and the success attained proved that strike compensation societies oper-

ated for peace, since actually the strikes grew fewer. The possibility that, on the other hand, employers whose business was in a bad way might provoke strikes in order to draw money from the funds of the societies, was guarded against by the investigations of the causes of any strike that took place. For the object of these societies was not to support the employer unconditionally against the employee, but to equalize their positions.

The first period of Stresemann's activity in the Reichstag was wholly dominated by the great and fundamental differences between the various classes and groups, in which a man of deeper insight could already discern the portents of the great revolution which was to come during and after the war. In December, 1911, the Imperial Insurance Act was passed, the last legislation in which Stresemann coöperated during his period. The object was the systematization of the whole body of the laws dealing with insurance in the Reich.

Stresemann gave in the Reichstag the following description of his basic idea of social insurance: "More important than any social policy for the German worker is the creation of opportunities for work." His special efforts were devoted to the question of employment insurance.

In 1907, at the convention of the National Liberal Party, he had broached the question of pension insurance for employees in a "model manner," as the press of all parties agreed. With the growing tendency towards trustification it was becoming ever more difficult for a member of the middle class to become independent. The salaries paid to the brain workers among the growing industrial middle class were largely inadequate, and many had reason to fear that they would suffer want at the end of their days. The natural consequence was that this class of employees tended to join the workers and, seeing possibilities offered to them, the Social Democratic Trades Unions strove to draw those people over to their side.

Under these conditions every nerve had to be strained to prevent a landslide of the middle class, which of course represented the most valuable potential support of the Liberal parties, towards the proletariat with its hostility to the State. Stresemann made himself the mouthpiece of that idea, and so successfully, that the Employees' Associations made him an honorary member, despite the fact that he was a representative of the employers and general secretary of a great industrial federation.

In addition to the great political issues, his mind was occupied with a host of minor questions, which often occasioned more trouble and annoyance than the great general problems. Many setbacks and misunderstandings, much ill-will on the part of his opponents, steeled the nerves of the young politician. We see Stresemann doing battle against the policy of the Central Association regarding raw materials, we see him fighting hard against the encroachments of agriculture, in their policies of taxation and tariffs. He embodied his thoughts in countless articles, in newspapers and periodicals, and in speeches, delivered in response to an ever-growing demand all over the Reich. He was the editor of "Saxon Industry," founded by himself, and there are to be found his great essays on industrial policy and the working classes.

In addition he wrote on a professorship at Leipzig, where a specialist [2] in industrial statistics had been appointed; on Bismarck, on St. Paul's Church, on the foundation of the Reich, on Kinkel. He spoke on the law dealing with unqualified medical practitioners, thereby incurring the enmity of the medical profession, because he wished to leave men free to cure themselves as they

[2] Bücher, *cf.* footnote, p. 30.

thought best. During the election of 1907 he made in his own constituency alone fifty-two speeches, besides those delivered to the Hansa League, to the industrial groups at Dresden, at conventions, exhibitions, and at workingmen's clubs. An important speech about working men was distributed in 210,000 copies, and was largely instrumental in strengthening the influence of the national workingmen's club.

His first trip on a Zeppelin was an historical experience for him, for he felt he was witnessing a turning point in the world's history. He wrote with enthusiasm about it: "It put me in mind of an old song about the child that sent up his kite and imagined that he was flying with it:

'And I thought I could fly in the sun's bright ray,
Oh, if only I could, for a single day!'

"The dream of childhood is to-day a reality; the legend of Icarus, which hitherto was real, is now nothing but a legend. We glide above the steamers, a faint roar from thousands of throats streams up to us, we pass over the land, and all work ceases wherever our airship appears. Even the laborer leaves his plow and greets with reverence the new era, which passes before him.

Rapturously the eye roams over lake and land."

Thanks to journeys across the length and breadth of Germany, Stresemann gained a deeper knowledge of the structure of his fatherland, learned ever more deeply to understand Germany's soul. To this period belong a number of letters and postcards to Bassermann, which are all instinct with the fresh enthusiasm of one who feels the pulse of his fatherland as it hastens forward, joyously creative, on its path. Often enough he had to write words of cheer to Bassermann, with whom he was corresponding about party tactics and about individual members.

In 1910, under the threat of new elections, he wrote: "I very much regret the tone of resignation in your letter. You have never yet given a binding promise not to stand again and I beg you not to do so now. Surely, we are all the creatures of time and moods, and you do not know that a year hence you will be thinking as you think now. But till the time, whenever it may be, when you lay down the Parliamentary leadership, you must not slacken your hold on the reins, but lead the party forward as unitedly as possible to the next election."

But the Reichstag pursued its normal course, and no new elections were held until 1912.

Bassermann attached the greatest importance to Stresemann's reëlection, and backed him up wherever he could. At a meeting at Annaberg, which he addressed with Stresemann, he remarked: "Stresemann is a man with a great future, endowed with a deep national feeling, a doughty fighter, who pursues his way straight onward, faithful only to his convictions."

But despite Stresemann's extremely brisk electioneering, and despite Bassermann's support, the seat was lost to the Social Democrats, partly owing to the fact that the Conservatives refused to support the National Liberals, and so helped the Social Democrats to win. A by-election at Greiz followed, and Stresemann again failed. But the remarkable thing in both cases, especially at Annaberg, was that the Social Democratic Party did not burst into whoops of victory, but paid tribute to Stresemann as an opponent worthy of respect, and honored him personally, once the fight was over, despite the political opposition between them.

Stresemann used his new-found, though involuntary, freedom for extending his horizon and his knowledge of foreign countries. In 1912 he traveled to Boston, to take part in the Congress of the International Chambers of Commerce, and

used the trip to make a study tour through the United States and Canada. The great speech he delivered before the United Chambers of Commerce at Toronto, which ended with a warning against an Anglo-German conflict, was distributed by the Associations of Canadian Manufacturers in mass editions.

The journey took him to Worcester, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dayton, Pittsburgh, Washington, Philadelphia, New York. Among other interesting experiences, he came to know Wilson, who was just then conducting his first campaign for the presidency. He had no inkling, at the time, that the judgment he formed of Wilson's personality and of Americanism in general, would one day stand him in such good stead. On a subsequent occasion he stated that there had not been one among the numerous meetings and conferences he attended where the words "humanity, mankind, civilization, peace of the whole world!" had not occurred. The President of the United States was the herald of a new ideal for humanity!

He had of course previously made shorter journeys abroad, particularly a trip to Belgium for the opening of the World Exhibition. He stated there that he saw in the exhibition "a

great peace symphony of the creative labors of all civilized nations."

Even without a seat in Parliament, the great demands made upon Stresemann, not least by himself, demanded tireless energy. He had attained to such a position, as speaker and politician, during his four years' activity in the Reichstag, that the demands upon him were as great as ever. He had not given up his economic labors, and was now able to develop them on the wider basis of political knowledge, and to focus them more generally. In the spring of 1914 he was stirred by the great project of a German Society for World Trade, which he meant to found in conjunction with Ballin.

The German services abroad, as Stresemann had often scathingly said, were a failure. The consuls were bureaucratic in their outlook, and had neither understanding nor enthusiasm for economic questions. The representative of the Foreign Office whom Stresemann requested to increase the propaganda funds for his department, asked scornfully in the Reichstag whether Stresemann would tell him what these funds were to be used for. Hence it was necessary for trade to help itself in the sphere of diplomacy. The German Society for World Trade was planned

as a union of all the industrial, trading and shipping companies. Its objects were the study of foreign markets, the establishment of a press bureau, which should collect news and carry on counter propaganda against the calumnies of the Reuter and the French press agency, who were disparaging German character and German goods. In addition it was to support German schools abroad. The establishment of a technical high school in China was planned, to compete against the English Engineering Association, and further plans were formed for promoting German interests abroad and thus indirectly serve German trade and the German people. The plan failed through a German lack of adaptability, and because Hugenberg feared to lose his influence, and countered Stresemann's efforts by setting up a rival "Company for Foreign Trade, Ltd."

Moreover, it was too late. The threatening clouds which had been gathering over Germany's head during the preceding decades discharged their thunderbolts. Stresemann was at the Kiel Regatta when the news of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand arrived. "Wonderful sunny days," he writes, "at Kiel Harbor; the English Fleet has come to visit us; English officers and men were exchanging the ribbons of their

caps with the Germans. We were standing on the conning-tower of the English battleship *Centurion* and looking over Kiel harbor. We had had a happy summer Sunday, when suddenly strange news came in. An Austrian Archduke was reported to have been murdered by a revolutionary in a remote corner of Bosnia. The rumor spread like wildfire among the ships, torpedo-boats dashed over and carried the news to the Kaiser's yacht. A few minutes later the English and German flags were lowered to half-mast, the ball was canceled, the Burgomaster of Hamburg conveyed to the Austrian departmental chief, Riedl, the condolences of the town of Hamburg on Austria's loss. In every soul there was a sense of the tragedy which seemed to pursue the House of Hapsburg, and the unfortunate Emperor Francis Joseph. But the air seemed full of some dark menace coming from some unknown quarter. It was there, plainly enough, and made one pack one's trunks, with a feeling that one must hurry home and be on the spot when the lightning began to flash. For one felt there must be a storm, though one did not know why it should be inevitable."

CHAPTER V

WAR POLITICS

IN those days, when the whole of Germany flared up in national wrath, when a wave of enthusiasm passed over the people, making them forget distinctions of party, philosophy and class, in the thought of serving the fatherland and giving of their best in its need—in those days, which to any one who has experienced them, must remain an intense spiritual experience—it was a bitter thing for Stresemann not to be able to work as an elected representative of the people, in the field most peculiarly his own, that of high politics. But he tried to labor all the harder in the position that remained to him. To begin with, no one knew how the outbreak of war would affect trade. Payments from abroad ceased, the goods ordered by enemy countries could no longer be delivered, the workers were called to the colors, but nonetheless Germany was the only country which did not need a moratorium. The admirable composure which the leaders of German industry main-

tained during the first weeks of the War is one of those wonders of discipline which distinguished the German people from all others during those terrible weeks. Here Stresemann found his first task. He took up residence again at Dresden, and exerted an enlightening, calming and encouraging influence in his own sphere, that of industry. Without fuss, he did in his appointed place all that a human being could do until such time as he should be permitted to work on a larger scale.

He was not obliged to remain long in a state of political inactivity, for in December, 1914, he contested a by-election and entered the Reichstag as member for Aurich. Bassermann himself, who was in the field as a cavalry captain, attached special importance to the presence of his lieutenant in Parliament, and wired to that effect from the front to the constituency. With Stresemann's reëlection to the Reichstag began his rise to the zenith of political power. His speeches began to draw the attention of the German public more and more, and outside Germany foreign countries began to listen to him, for people realized that Stresemann had the gift of putting into words what a great part of the German people thought and felt. During the war years

Stresemann's speeches always received special prominence in the press, and were reported with a fullness generally accorded only to the speeches of leading statesmen. In his struggle to enlarge the influence of Parliament in the Reich, his speeches were of the utmost importance, for the mere fact that a Parliamentarian without rank or title could gain such influence over public opinion at home or abroad by the power of his thought and personality, was a tribute to the prestige of Parliament.

Stresemann's eloquence has often given rise to discussion. No one who has heard him speak could resist its power. But from that fact his opponents tried to prove that such a power of carrying human beings with him was a dangerous gift in the hands of an individual. They talked of demagogy and pretended to believe that his rhetoric deceived his listeners, producing an emotional enthusiasm instead of laying the facts before them.

Stresemann has been contemptuously referred to as an agitator. If an agitator is a man who impels others to action, who moves them to think and create, then Stresemann is certainly a great agitator. Some time ago Clemenceau said in a book about Demosthenes, that the latter is known

and esteemed only as a speaker, that his greatest achievement as a statesman resulted from his power of speech which compelled his hearers to act.

In what does the force of Stresemann's speeches consist?

Whence do they derive their effectiveness?

Cicero, in his book *De Oratore,* gives it as his opinion that "Writing is the best method to teach and train the intending speaker." As we have seen, Stresemann had felt the urge, from childhood onwards, to write down the thoughts which moved him. His literary practice gave him the technical skill to pour his thoughts into the most effective mold, gave him fullness and variety of expression. For the technique of form and expression which the writer learns during years of labor and effort becomes available for the speaker in moments of spontaneous enthusiasm. Few of Stresemann's speeches are artistically constructed. There is scarcely one which could compare in form with the almost mathematical clearness of Ciceronian rhetoric.

If it is the essence of romanesque expression to let the thoughts flow into an accepted classical mold, and of Germanic expression that spirit and content, rejecting predetermined forms, should

strive towards new and individual forms, then Stresemann's speeches were typically Germanic. Or if objectivity be the test of true Germanic feeling, then Stresemann's speeches are still essentially German, for their compelling force depends on the iron logic of facts. There are to be found in his speeches few metaphors such as that, for instance, used by the Imperial Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, who at the last moment took "refuge on the raft of the universal franchise." The similes which occur to him are mostly taken from practical and commercial life, their object is rather to explain and simplify than to adorn.

To give examples: when he advocated a Reichstag vote of sufficient funds for the Colonies and the colonial forces, he said: "Every business man knows that when you establish a branch, you must endow it with sufficient means." During the debate on the law respecting conditions of labor, to which both employers and employees were giving the cold shoulder, he said it was like a registrar of marriages who wished to marry a couple by force when both were fighting shy. After the war, Stresemann opposed both the extension of state socialism and an immediate return to private enterprise, for the latter would be "as

though a doctor sent his patient straight into the open air, without first waiting for the stage of convalescence."

What lends to Stresemann's speeches their popular appeal, is frequently the clear-cut phrases with which he sums up, in one word, the significance of some policy or situation. On his first appearance, at the Party Convention of 1906, he compressed the purport of his speech into one sentence: "The party must have a craving for power." That sentence was caught up by all the subsequent speakers, and thus Stresemann's speech achieved a great cumulative effect. One can find such slogans in most of the speeches, as when in 1923 he summed up the meaning of his policy in the sentence: "Through work and sacrifice to freedom." Or when he produced the famous simile of the "Silver streak on the horizon." Such phrases and slogans have often contributed to the popularity of his speeches. Stresemann puts in the high lights in his speeches with great economy, mostly at the moment when he leads his hearers back to the crises in German history, shows their connection with German development and assigns to them their place in the chain that connects past and future. Thus he lifts his subject out of the sphere of politics into the realm of the universal.

Stresemann possesses a prodigious memory, and can draw at all times from the storehouse of German literature and politics. When he expounds what German poets and thinkers have said and felt, he produces a deep impression by the art of his delivery and the command he exercises over his voice. It is Schönaich-Karolath, Goethe, Liliencron and the poets who had a message to preach, whose words come most readily to his mind. When he cites historical events, he does not describe what happened, but lets his listeners experience the event itself. He does not allow his hearers merely to listen, but forces them to share in the labor of his thought, drags them as it were on to the platform, where they are compelled to experience, think, and feel with him. Bismarck did the same when he strove for expression and laboriously shaped the wonderful sentences and similes which fill his speeches. Words and sentences come to Stresemann in such ample measure, that one feels that it is not he who is speaking, but that something is speaking through him. Yet every word is carefully weighed. While speaking, he is so filled and pervaded by his subject that he carries his audience along. Often his speech carries him far away from his original intention; and he said in his speech on the censorship, that to

read a draft, or recite word for word, would gag any speaker worth his salt. And yet it is not only his temperament which bears one along, but the contents of his speech and the profundity of his thought. This is evident when one contrasts one of Stresemann's speeches with one of Hitler's. The latter, too, has undoubtedly the gift of carrying his hearers with him at the moment, but his words lack any after-effect. The reading of a speech by Hitler leaves one with an insipid taste in the mouth, because his speeches lack intrinsic truth. An Italian once wrote about the effect produced by Stresemann's speeches:

"Like all great politicians, Stresemann does not impose his tone, but receives it from his subject; his individuality is merged in the facts. Nevertheless, his words, once they have crossed the threshold of expression, are no longer subservient to facts alone, are not merely an interpretation of fleeting realities. In his speech, so rich in ideas, the plastic images of a high political art well up, whilst the words form a garland round it. That is the lyrical process, which makes Stresemann the best and most convincing speaker in the Reichstag and invests his speeches with a special significance. The secret of Stresemann's success is an artistic secret, for he is an artist in politics, like any sculp-

tor or painter. Thus by his living example he makes real the old Aristotelian saying, that in politics a man must be, first and foremost, an artist."

The artistic sense in politics, the apprehension of the past, emotionally as well as intellectually, the intuitive sense of what is coming, has never been more lacking in a body of politicians than it was in Germany during the war.

The address Stresemann delivered on December 4th, 1914, at Aurich, gives the basis of his war policy and the starting point for all his future activity. In that first great war speech he tried to lay bare the fundamental questions, which the people had to understand, if their attitude to the war was to be rightly focussed. If they wanted to break through their ring of enemies, it was essential to recognize and overcome their strongest enemy. To grasp the meaning of the war demanded an understanding of the enemy's aim, and a realization of the causes of the war. Stresemann refused to seek for the origins of the war in the white, red, and blue books. They only dealt with the last weeks preceding its outbreak, and each nation offered whatever would exonerate itself. The aim of France was clear: the idea of revenge, the resentment, never overcome, at the

collapse of 1871, the belief that Alsace-Lorraine was longing to be reunited with the French motherland. Russia's war aims, too, were evident: indebtedness to France, lack of assurance on the part of her rulers, and a Pan-Slavism fomented by French influence. Here, a misguided people, there, a people whose national consciousness, healthy enough in itself, had turned towards wrong aims. According to Stresemann there was never any hatred against the Russian people, but only against its responsible statesmen, who had led that unhappy nation to the battlefields for the glory of France. Even the reasons which had brought the French into the war were intelligible to the Germans through their own national consciousness. No hatred was felt against France, until the hatred felt by the French was evident in its effects. The pivot of the coalition against Germany was, in Stresemann's view, England. In that speech, and on several subsequent occasions, he expressed what seemed to him the motto of the war: "Propter invidiam." The language, he argued, which England could best understand, was that of figures. England fancied that she saw a danger to herself in the upward striving of Germany, a country which surpassed England in energy and achievement. The war had already

STRESEMANN

begun in 1887, when the "Made in Germany" Bill was passed to banish German goods from the English market. It was shown in the Patent Law of 1907, which did not protect German patents unless the goods were manufactured chiefly in England, thus forcing German inventors either to sell their patents to England or to manufacture in England. The war by arms was the last form of the economic struggle directed against Germany, and nothing showed this so well as the words written in September, 1897, by Sir Alfred Mond in the *Saturday Review*:[1] "If Germany were extinguished to-morrow, the day after to-morrow there is not one Englishman in the world who would not be the richer. Nations have fought for years over a city or a right of a succession; must they not fight for two hundred and fifty million pounds yearly commerce? . . . at a time when England has awakened to what is alike inevitable and her best hope of prosperity. 'Germaniam esse delendam.'" If Stresemann needed a proof for the correctness of his views, it was the character of English warfare, which was, to begin with, directed more against German trade and manufactures than against her army.

[1] Viz., of September 11th. The article is not signed.—Tr.

Stresemann, in the later years of the war, was an optimist, consciously and from his inmost heart, and wished to be so, for he was convinced that only the faith which can remove mountains could possibly give Germany victory. He had, no doubt, accepted those words of Clemenceau, which said that the war would be won by the nation whose nerves could hold out a quarter of an hour longer than the others. But just because he had recognized in England the most powerful opponent among the Allies, it was clear to him from the first, and he did not fail to say so to those who believed in an easy victory, that one would have to fight "tooth and nail" to win. Stresemann has always spoken with respect of the enemy's achievements, and pointed with an undercurrent of regret to the vital forces which were welding the English people and the English government into a compact whole with one common, mighty will. Thus he once said:

"I must warn you against belittling the enemy statesmen and speaking of them in offensive terms. I could have wished that there had been no mention of the 'plebeian' Lloyd George, for that same Lloyd George appears to be one of the greatest organizers in this world struggle, he seems to me a man of great capacity, who, of course, as an Eng-

lishman, is placing his capacity at the service of his nation, just as we demand that our statesmen should place their capacity at the service of our nation. All respect to the 'plebeian,' who has given us many a hard nut to crack in this fight, who has created his Munitions Ministry, before ever we, with our organizing capacity, were able to do the same!

"I am certainly no worshiper or devotee of England, but I must warn you against a belief that the English people have lost any of their former toughness. They are our toughest opponents, who will know every whit as well how to endure privations, how to suffer hunger, as we in Germany, and no one doubts but that England will only acknowledge herself beaten when she no longer has the power to fight. But I should regard it as a mistake if, supposing fortune grants us victory, we make that victory too easy for her."

What does this warning mean, against making one's victory too easy for the enemy? Stresemann's war aims have been the center of much dispute. Some have charged him with being an annexationist, others, with having weakened the will to victory by his lukewarm attitude. He himself once said: "Great events make one reverent." He

Augsburg Seminary Library

felt the great revolution of history which the war would bring about, though its effects upon the inward and outward life could not yet be foreseen. Being, from the nature of his whole development, an advocate of European and international coöperation, he sought to take a long view. What distinguished his war aims from those of Germany's enemies was that he strove for a just peace, as being in Germany's interests. Thus he wrote in his pamphlet, "England's Economic War Against Germany," published in 1915: "It is our political task to hold England in check, if we would give back to the world that freedom of economic competition which to-day is suffering under England's monopoly. We are not trying to win world domination, nor the subjugation of the peoples, but free access to the seas." He saw that Germany's position would only be securely founded if it were stabilized in such a way as to take account of the international aspirations of the peoples. Germany, till then, had not enjoyed such a position in colonial matters, nor had any other nation, in view of England's preponderance on the seas. When victory had been won, Germany was to stand on a footing of equality with other nations. In that sense Stresemann gave to a collection of his war speeches and essays the title, "Michael,

hark, the sea-wind roars," a title derived from Gotthold Schwab's Naval Song:

Michael, hark, the sea-wind roars,
Up, and guard thy fame,
He who now rests on his oars,
Needs must lose the game;
He who now his part ignores,
Must for ever fail:
Michael, hark, the sea-wind roars,
Up, and hoist thy sail! [2]

"Ulk" once published, in 1917, a cartoon depicting Stresemann holding a palm of peace and a torch of war, with the caption: "You come again, O hovering shapes!" [3]

"Ulk" was not far wrong. The caption merely proved that it did not grasp the sense of Stresemann's policy. Stresemann—to retain "Ulk's" symbolism—always kept the palm-branch of peace in his hand, was always ready to conclude a peace

[2] *Michel, horch, der Seewind pfeift,*
Auf, und spitz die Ohren!
Wer nicht jetzt ins Ruder greift,
Hat das Spiel verloren.
Wer nicht jetzt sein Teil gewinnt,
Wird es ewig missen.
Michel, horch, es pfeift der Wind,
Segel gilt's zu hissen!

[3] "Faust": Dedication.

which would give Germany an equal place among the nations; but so long as peace was unattainable, the torch of war was to flame on high. When he laid down Germany's war aims, he would point to the fact that before the war one could buy in France periodicals illustrated with maps showing the future partition of Germany, and advocating the severance of traditionally German soil from the Reich. It was highly doubtful whether these ambitions could best be countered by moderation. Besides, the situation was more difficult for the quadruple alliance, because for Austria, Germany, the Bulgarians and Turkey, peace involved quite divergent interests, whereas in the case of the Allies the interests were far more closely akin. All were out for conquest: the Trentino, Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen Malmédy, the German eastern frontiers and, for England, colonies and trade.

Stresemann set out from the premise that the army and its commanders enjoyed such unshakeable confidence among the people that all other considerations must yield to the claims of the Army Command to a peace which would safeguard Germany against renewed aggression. Stresemann qualified that premise, however, with the doubt whether the Army Command could suc-

ceed in maintaining that confidence unshaken. The German, being a person of objective mind, remembered that the enemy, on all frontiers, would defend every square yard of the soil of his fatherland, with a love no less great than that which fired the German soldiers. Stresemann pointed out the dangers which were involved therefore in the annexation of enemy territory. He opposed emphatically the annexationists. Nor did he ever forget, even during the bitterest political and military struggles, the ties which joined the European countries to one another. He spoke of readiness to disarm, provided it were reciprocal and gradual, and advocated social protection for the working classes, so as to raise their status and make competition equitable. His principle during the war was: *primum vivere, deinde philosophari.* How often did he not fight against the deadening spirit of the theorists who wished to monopolize the war aims question, and vent his sarcasm on the people who were fighting for party tactics about war aims, instead of for victory. He recognized the danger that the Germans had to fight almost harder for victory, and the will to victory, at home than at the front, where the bloody tasks of the day prevented chill theory from laying its deadening hand on men's reason and heart. "We had

lost the war in the diplomatic sphere, before it began in the military." That was the bitter knowledge with which Stresemann entered the war. But he was not the man to be discouraged, and fought on to win the diplomatic fight, the fight for world opinion and for sane public opinion at home. "Let us learn," he said, "in this increasingly democratic age to assign to the public opinion of the world its place as a paramount factor in foreign politics." The pre-war sins of omission could no longer be rectified. The cables and the press of the world were in the hands of England, English statesmen were systematically working on world opinion through their speeches, and we could think of nothing better than a weary, ineffective defense, which generally came too late. Energy and clear-sightedness were present to a much higher degree among the extreme left parties of the Reichstag, where—as Stresemann once reproached the Deputy Cohn—there was a spiteful desire to depreciate any German action, whereas no word of protest was raised against the incident at Karlsruhe where a number of children were killed by a French aëroplane attack on an undefended town, and no voice was raised against French gas attacks. Stresemann once scathingly compared the effect of Bethmann-Hollweg's speeches with those

of enemy statesmen: "It is a beating of muted drums. His language may be understood in Germany; abroad it is not understood. There the press works with blunter instruments, such as the Entente adopted when they issued their Note in reply to the Central Powers. To German feeling their methods produce an effect like some forensic plea by Monsieur Briand—but a skillful plea, one not addressed to the statesmen, but to the peoples out yonder. The Entente speeches make but a scant parade of polished diplomatic expressions, but use catchwords that leap to the eye. The fact is that the diplomacy of our enemies is always aware that in this democratic age the feelings of the masses constitute a factor of incalculable importance for the issue of the war. One must admire the way in which a group of powers who are violating Greece, speak of German violations without blushing before their own consciences."

Stresemann saw that one of the root evils paralyzing public opinion, was the handling of the censorship. If the military censors proscribed Goethe and garbled Lenau, that was merely comic and reflected on the censors themselves. But when even Reichstag speeches were mutilated by a subaltern's blue pencil, any Reichstag Deputy

conscious of the dignity attaching to a representative of the people must be outraged by it. The war reports of the Allies and the speeches of enemy statesmen were faithfully reproduced in the German press, and Stresemann did not on principle object to this, but he soon felt that there was reason for suspecting that the enemy statesmen and generals were composing their speeches and reports with an eye on the German press, so as to do what the German Government was neglecting to do, namely, to influence German public opinion. By the prohibition of open discussion rumors were fostered, which alarmed public opinion. The growing difficulty in the supply of food caused anxiety to the people, and it was forbidden to speak openly about the actual amount of food available, although the enemy could easily ascertain the facts from newspaper advertisements. Plenty of space was given to rumors, partly spread by enemy agents, which hinted of profiteering and imperfect organization at home. To the speeches of enemy statesmen Bethmann-Hollweg replied "after the manner of the postillion's horn in Münchhausen, which blew in the Spring the tunes blown into it during the Winter." When Clemenceau and Lloyd George were advocating far-reaching conquests for their countries,

the only reply given them was the whisperings and murmurings audible amid the darkness of German public life.

Such graveyard silence of public opinion was not what Stresemann meant by *Burgfrieden*. "Sometimes we observe with all the parties," he said in the Reichstag, "how difficult it is to get acceptance even for a Party program. It is far more difficult, nay, impossible, for the *Burgfrieden* to be secured. No, gentlemen, by *Burgfrieden* I mean mutual respect among the parties, I mean that each from the outset should concede that his own love for the Fatherland is equaled by that of his opponents. We must admit that our opponents also wish to see the Fatherland great and respected in the world, but that the methods differ by which each party thinks it can attain that end. If we conceive of *Burgfrieden* in that sense, we retain the possibility of expressing our differing views on economic questions, on social problems and on the great problems of the future bound up with the war aims, without risking the damage or breakdown of the State."

Thus endeavoring not to regard the war as an end in itself, but to keep the hour in sight when Germany would return to her normal state, Stresemann was one of those who dissented from the

financial policy pursued by Germany during the war. The method of raising war loans was not in accordance, in his opinion, with proper business standards. He wanted to follow the old English tradition, and cover the war costs, while fighting was still in progress, by increased revenues. For that reason he strongly advocated the taxation of war profits, but the screw should not be applied so rigorously as to endanger necessary production. He thought it uneconomical to tax war profits so heavily that the industries would be left with insufficient means to re-convert their factories at the conclusion of the war, and resume the fight for foreign markets with the means for effective competition.

The question of the taxation of war profits was also an ethical one. One of the reasons why the spirit of 1914 had passed away so quickly was that the German people, and especially the soldiers at the front, had to look on while a section of industry and trade, including the sort of business gentry who formerly "had not the honor of being reckoned among the German merchants," were enriching themselves through the war. But the fact that these questions so disturbed public opinion, was in Stresemann's opinion, which he shared with the majority of the National Liberal

Party, the fault of the Chancellor. He had not been able to convert the national enthusiasm of 1914 to permanent use. Instead of sustaining the people's indignation at what they considered an unjust war, he could only talk feebly of the "wrong done to Belgium" and of his policy having collapsed like a house of cards through England's declaration of war. From the first, the Chancellor did not believe in a German victory, nor did he know how to adjust his policy to varying events. Both the "annexationists" and the supporters of a "peace by renunciation" felt justified in quoting him as their authority. Moreover, he suffered from depression and labored under a constant sense of insecurity, which made him suspect intrigues directed against himself. One such case, an intercepted telegram of Bassermann's, in which the latter counseled his friends to beware of "the tall fellow," made Bethmann go to the length of trying to sow discord within the National Liberal Party, in order to oust Bassermann from the leadership. When this failed, he brought an action against "Major" Bassermann. Such personal differences between Bethmann and the leader of the National Liberal Party were certainly not calculated to produce confidence in the country. Stresemann never be-

lieved that the Chancellor was a man of sufficient mental balance.

Moreover, bureaucracy, which since November, 1908, had replaced personal authority, artificially checked all individual initiative, re-cast every idea in terms of "organization," paralyzed the intuitions of the business mind, which might have rendered Germany great service, and led to a tacit state socialism.

To a man in touch with the ideas of the people, it soon became clear that in that way Germany could never win the war. Even the organization of the army had not functioned as it should have done, and there had been many failures of a technical nature. Stresemann knew that ever since the autumn of 1914 industry had been offering tanks to the army in vain. He knew that the possibilities for constructing submarines had not been exploited as fully as possible, and when the party leaders, during the discussion of the Auxiliary Service Law, expressed their surprise that the production of munitions had decreased at a time when England had increased hers seventeenfold, they received the melancholy answer: "You see, we haven't a Lloyd George."

Till late in the war, Stresemann put up with many anomalies in the Constitution, believing

that the national unity and the exemplary conduct of the army would be thus ensured at a time of crisis. Now he had to look on while amateurs in land warfare, such as England and America, achieved better results than Germany. Once more it became necessary to enforce the old principle of the National Liberal Party to take heed of the signs of the times and to satisfy the new demands. The World War demanded the consolidation of all the forces of the people, and therefore required that the representatives of Social Democracy, whose followers were fighting among the rank and file, should be called to share the control and responsibility. "To fulminate against the Social Democrats," he wrote in the National Liberal Correspondence, "is extremely easy. To force them to collaborate, and to see to it that our external victories are not endangered by their opposition, is less popular, but is precisely what is needed to-day."

The question was how the reforms, once they were recognized as necessary, ought to be tackled. There were two possible ways: either to pass them resolutely and clearly, at once, or to postpone them with equal determination till after the war, in order not to endanger national unity, and to forbid negotiations regarding them while the

war was in progress. Bethmann-Hollweg chose a third and less happy alternative. He promised to carry through reforms, and then shelved them. After the Easter declaration, Stresemann did not doubt that the reforms must be taken in hand at once, regardless of the dangers they involved. It was no longer possible to go back on them. Like the majority of National Liberals he believed that the plural vote was desirable for Prussia, at least as a transition stage. Subsequently he supported the equal vote and thereby exposed himself to a charge of inconsistency from the parties of the right. The situation, after the Emperor's July edict, was this: the Government's hesitation and continued promises had ruled out the possibility of minor reforms, and made it imperative to act on a large scale, lest the work of reform should be taken out of the hands of the Government altogether. The question of what sort of franchise was most equitable, had become a mere matter of theory. It was no longer debatable whether the interests of the State demanded one form of the franchise or another. Things had gone too far for that. The choice lay between accepting the demands of the time, and being destroyed by them. At the same time and for the same reasons as Strese-

mann, the leader of the National Liberals in Prussia had given his support to the equal vote, and when Lohmann, himself a National Liberal, attacked the two leaders for their *volte-face,* Stresemann saw the imminent danger and adopted such strong language toward his critic, that the *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten* foresaw the coming cleavage in the National Liberal ranks. Stresemann did not let that danger divert him from his course, for the goal was fixed, and he would not have been shaken by the opposition of the whole party. Having discerned the goal, however, he had to find some way of leading the party toward it. "It is being pointed out," Stresemann wrote in a survey in the *Deutsche Stimmen,* "that the fighting army at the front does not look upon this as a vital question. That is undoubtedly correct. The men who are fighting in Flanders have other cares and other ideas. Their soul vibrates to a larger rhythm than internal Prussian politics. They are either men bound by their duty, who fulfill their tasks as soldiers to the limit of their powers, and have no time for political questions, or else they are conscious of what their struggles and victories mean for the future of mankind, and then they feel themselves as co-workers in world-changes, in

problems more tremendous than Prussian electoral reform. But when they return, they will once more be citizens. Then they will realize the great contrast between those who for years have sacrificed their life and health out there, in order to serve the State, and those who have not merely avoided want and pain, but have in many cases risen to ease and wealth. To preach to such men that political influence should vary according to education and possession, and that such distinctions are vital to the state, will not be easy even for those gifted with the tongues of angels."

The central executive of the party resolved by 104 votes against 24 to ask the Prussian National Liberals to support the Government draft, for even though the Prussian group preferred the plural franchise, the question was not one of justice but of necessity. The Prussian franchise had become one of such importance to the Reich that Stresemann definitely wished to see it taken up by the Reichstag. The old factions surviving from the foundation of the Reich once more asserted themselves: Conservatives, Particularists, Old Prussians and Imperial-German Liberals. The Conservatives would not see that the history of the past thirty years and, still more, the war, had already decided in favor of the Imperial idea

against a strict federalistic conception. If Stresemann needed a proof of how essential it was to take account of the changed times and the changed economic and social structure of the nation, it was furnished by the debates in the Upper House. One of the members countered the demand for the equal franchise in Prussia by a demand for the restriction of the universal Reichstag franchise.

The way the Constitution was applied in the Reich no longer answered to the necessities of the war. Among the middle class parties, Stresemann was one of the first to endeavor to make a breach in the antiquated conceptions of necessary constitutional reform. His great Reichstag speech of March 29, 1917, which is included in his collected speeches and writings, under the title of "New Times," will remain a document of prime importance to any historian in search of the foundations of the new order in Germany. In that speech Stresemann argued:

"We want to leave no doubt upon this score: The new age demands its rights. If we were to repeat the mistake in internal politics committed in 1815, we should most seriously injure ourselves and our future development. We rejoice in the arguments put forward by the Imperial Chan-

cellor in the Prussian House of Deputies, though we have not always shared his views on foreign policy. I believe there is not one amongst us now, who does not heartily rejoice in the statement that we must convert the spiritual experiences of this World War into a new order of things for the future. But we are of opinion that there is no need to wait until after the war. In saying that, I am conscious of a departure from the attitude we have hitherto adopted. But I must say one thing: If at the commencement of the war, if, during certain phases of the negotiations between the Reichstag and the Imperial Chancellor, we were of the opinion that these questions were secondary compared with the actual conduct of the war, we were influenced by the hope that this war would come to an early end. As it is, we are faced with the fact that the war has brought upon us the most revolutionary economic changes, that we have to demand sacrifices which previously would have been regarded as impossible, and that now questions are pressing for an answer, which we believe should be solved during the war. Hence it is the opinion of my political friends, it is the opinion of my party, that the time has come for envisaging a new order of things in Germany and her Federal States.

"Not of course, according to the ideas of Bernstein and his followers. In that case every one of us might have his party program printed and submit it as a bill. No, it is far from our minds that the programs of the various parties should forthwith be examined as to their feasibility on questions of constitutional law. But we regard it as the duty and the task of Parliament, to take in hand right now the great questions of state law and constitutional law, to which the present time invites us. Those questions are broached by the Progressives' amendment and by other suggestions, for instance that of Deputy Noske, which deals widely with the changes in the distribution of Reichstag electoral districts, a change maybe in the general composition of this House, which stands to-day on the basis of the old population figures. I may point out that my political friends, in a proposal by Bassermann, have already demanded a distribution of the Reichstag electoral districts.

"But we must also examine the question of whether Proportional Representation would not correspond in a far higher degree to our present-day political needs than district elections, for the latter presuppose a relationship between deputy and district, such as we have in the Prussian Diet.

This is perhaps necessary for all questions debated there, as they are often of a local nature, but it is questionable whether such a relation is necessary in a Parliament which debates the great questions of foreign and economic policy, social legislation and constitutional law, for these do not in any way affect the particular interests of an individual district. We should, it is true, object to the introduction of a scheme which treated the whole Reich as a single electoral district.

"My political friends have never made the Parliamentary system a question of Party. We have very lively disputes within our own ranks on that subject. But the experiences of the World War compel us to a reëxamination of our system of government. It also seems to me doubtful whether we are justified in looking down, as it were, on democratically governed countries, as though they were not in a position to accomplish their national tasks to the same extent as we. The debate in the Upper House sounded a note of horror at the idea of 'Parliamentary system, and a strengthening of the prerogatives of Parliament.' Some said that these things were endangering the rights of the Crown and leading towards a Republic. The middle class also consider that at best such a system amounts to a

dreary leveling-down, a government by lawyers, such as would eventually lead to inward decay and collapse. If that were true, we should not have to fight so hard for our very life against England. If it were true, then surely England could never have succeeded in forming a great system of alliances with all sorts of nations, while against us nations are fighting, with whom we had been allied for more than thirty years. We had in fact lost the war diplomatically, before it began in the military sphere.

"No, it is surely a fact that we have learned from this World War that the parliamentary system creates a firm bond between people, Government and State. I should never, in peace-time, have thought it possible that this parliamentary system could withstand a war which would shake the very foundations of the States concerned. It also seems to me that the political and diplomatic amateurs whom that system has thrown up, have been no whit inferior in skill to our professional diplomatists. We must acknowledge that these men have won successes in the organization of their own countries, which will tax us to the uttermost if victory is not to slip from our grasp.

"I would also ask to be allowed to point out a matter which has been repeatedly remarked on by

our revered leader Bassermann. That is the great discrepancy between the recent mighty development of German economic forces and intellectual powers, and German political successes which lagged far behind. Germany has during the last few decades passed through a tremendous economic development: it occupies the second place in world commerce, it is the foremost industrial country in the world. Our captains of industry are personalities of the first rank, recognized as such far beyond our own frontiers; our technology, our chemistry, our mental sciences, even our agriculture with its high yield—all these are in the front rank of development. Hence it surely follows that there can be no dearth of personalities in Germany; and yet we see, in contrast with this brilliant development, which ended by arousing the envy of others against us, that the political advantages have mostly been on the side of our enemies. They knew far better than we how to win the sympathy of other nations; they knew how to encircle us, with the result that we are now waging a fight for our existence. If, in contrast with that brilliant development within, we suffer political defeats abroad and, despite our exemplary social policies, a ceaseless growth of radical elements at home, it follows there must be some

flaw in our political make-up, and we must find out what it is that requires improvement.

"We must give up the idea, for instance, that a man cannot hold a post in a Government office because he is a Socialist. Why should Calwer be debarred from the presidency of the statistical office, or Schippel from taking a share in the preparation of commercial treaties? We see at the present time Dr. August Müller collaborating with Herr von Batocki. Who would formerly have dreamed of a representative of the Social Democratic Coöperatives—if I am not mistaken, of the Central Union of Social Democratic Coöperatives—collaborating in a great imperial department with an East Prussian Lord Lieutenant? Once that collaboration is ensured, we shall settle the great questions which will confront us in the post-war period, and which may perhaps lead to violent internal convulsions, with far less friction than if we stubbornly cling to outgrown principles.

"Many of the paths we desire to tread are new. We are not afraid of them. The natural sense of the people can find the way. Treitschke once said that there are times when the natural sense of the masses becomes a power in the life of the state. We desire the natural sense of the masses to become not only a power in the State, but a

power in the hands of the State, so that the State and people are welded into one unity. We desire an end to that narrow-minded view which holds that the private citizen is the born enemy of the state. We desire the citizen to feel with his whole being that he is a member of the State, whose progress benefits him and whose breakdown harms him. That, however, is only possible if government, elected representatives and people form an organic whole. It is impossible if the people feel that there is a chasm between them and the government, which finds no adequate expression in Parliament. If you bridge that chasm, then the national consciousness of the German people, which has so gloriously stood the test of this war, will become the surest foundation for the future."

To express such views was almost revolutionary on the part of a middle class politician. In the government parties, even in the National Liberal Party, there were many who had not yet begun to realize that the vast changes wrought by the war demanded a complete reshaping of Germany's internal political structure. During those most critical phases of the war the Reichstag might not be sitting for months; a free exchange of opinion was prevented by the censorship, and the door

was open for all sorts of political rumor and intrigue. A mania broke out for confidential memoranda, which carried uneasiness into the ranks of responsible parliamentarians.

When the Kingdom of Poland was proclaimed by the Government, at a time when all discussion on war aims was strictly forbidden, and thus one of its most essential points in the liquidation of the war was settled without consultation with either the party leaders or the Reichstag, a letter addressed by the National Liberal Party to the Chancellor informed him that such happenings damaged the belief of the people in the Government was partly the work of Stresemann.

Bethmann was incapable of guiding public opinion by frank collaboration with the Reichstag and of winning the confidence of the people's chosen representatives in the Reichstag. To that incapacity Stresemann ascribed the Erzberger Peace Resolution. The parties to that Resolution acted without guidance and without a clear objective, on their own responsibility, to the detriment of the Government and the conduct of the war. The National Liberal Party had no share in the Peace Resolution, for Stresemann pursued very different tactics. He wanted his party to acquire power by internal reforms, and then to

intervene actively and influence events, instead of expressing, by feeble resolutions, opinions which one had not the means to carry out. The fiasco of the Peace Resolution, which was merely taken as a proof of Germany's weakness, proved Stresemann's theory to be correct.

In the other crucial question of the war, that of unrestricted submarine warfare, no final verdict has been passed as to which side showed the better judgment. Stresemann was decidedly in favor of the unrestricted use of the submarine weapon, for he held that Germany could not afford to wait till England had whipped the last neutral in the war, before using her sharpest weapon. As to International Law, there existed no binding regulation on the use of submarines, and, as Stresemann remarked with bitter irony, no nation could afford to postpone the use of the only weapon that was still effective, until International Law had caught up with technical developments. In his attitude to the submarine question he was followed by only 35 out of the 44 members of the party. Subsequently, when it was found that the submarine had not fulfilled the hopes the German Admiralty had set on it, Stresemann pointed out that the official memorandum on the subject dated back to the year 1916, and that England had had

sufficient time before the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare to make her defensive preparations. In estimating the influence of this measure on America's entry into the war, Stresemann took the line that Germany was already in a state of economic war with the United States, and that Wilson was only watching for the moment "when the opportunity for intervention would be offered to him, so as to place himself with all the resources of the United States, including manpower, at the disposal of the Entente, once it was threatened with defeat at the hands of Germany." If the Entente were overthrown by Germany, then the United States would have backed the wrong horse, then all their deliveries of goods and their credits might be endangered, and Germany would emerge as a rival more threatening than ever in the markets of the world.

As regards the importance of the American fighting forces, Stresemann was bound to rely on Capelle who, as Secretary of State for Naval Affairs, had declared that in his opinion the possibility of American troops being sent to the European theaters of war was "nil."

When Bethmann-Hollweg hesitated and vacillated over the submarine question, Stresemann attacked him in the chief committee of the Reichstag,

and according to the Committee of Investigation it was this attack which gave the final impetus to the Chancellor's resignation. For the first time in the history of the National Liberal Party it was decided that the Deputy Chairman of the Party should call on the Head of the Civil Cabinet and demand the resignation of the Chancellor. For since the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland he had ceased to enjoy public confidence. By his vacillation Bethmann had so gravely imperiled the value of internal political reforms that he was no longer the man to grant them. At best he might have saved himself by passing an equal franchise bill, but this would not have benefited the Crown. "He fell," as Stresemann remarked at the time, "because no one held him up."

The National Liberal Party proposed Bülow as his successor and made the necessary preparations for his appointment. Stresemann discussed the matter thoroughly with Duke Ernst Günther of Slesvig-Holstein, and pointed out that probably no one was better qualified for preparing for peace than Bülow, with his wide international relations, his great diplomatic skill and his reputation as a statesman. Moreover, Bülow was trusted to carry out the internal political reforms, and would know how to win over the parties. In the upshot,

the plan broke down on the resistance of the Kaiser, who could not forget the November days of 1908. In his place Michaelis was appointed. While Bülow's appointment would have been a safe one in every way, Stresemann considered the appointment of Michaelis to be a risky experiment at such a dangerous time. When the few weeks of his Chancellorship were ended, Stresemann wrote:

"The Imperial Chancellor Michaelis did not, he said, want the leadership to be taken from him. As a matter of fact, he never had it. His was an unpolitical nature, and he felt equally unhappy in Parliament and in diplomatic negotiations. There was a feeling among all parties that here was a man of some eminence, gifted in economic matters, who had been put into the wrong place. He met with no support even in Conservative quarters. If certain Conservatives supported him at the end, it was because they objected to his being overthrown by Parliament. Dissatisfaction at Michaelis' chancellorship became general after his unfortunate speech in the Reichstag Committee and his failure during the debate on Foreign Policy. But what swept him out of office was his exaggeration of the troubles in the German Fleet, which was eagerly taken up by an attentive

audience of foreign nations. Michaelis' report gave the impression that similar conditions prevailed in Germany as in the Russian Baltic Fleet. The Fleet had to retrieve the Chancellor's mistakes, but the conquest of Oesel did not efface the impression he had made by his speech."

How much Stresemann's policy would have differed from that of Michaelis may be gauged from the account he gave of how he would have acted. He wrote at the time, in the *Deutsche Stimmen:*

"If the Chancellor wished to reply to Dittmann's charges, he could have said that Herr Dittmann was the last person who had a right to complain of punishments in the navy. His party was rendering Germany financially defenseless by a refusal of credits, and should not be surprised therefore if the thought came to men of more primitive mentality, that by the same token they were justified in making the country defenseless in a military sense. He might have pointed to the severity of the law, which applied in these matters a different standard in war than in peace-time, and he ought to have emphasized that these occurrences paled by the side of the courage our men had shown at Skagerrak, and the pertinacity and toughness of the crews of German submarines. The shining sense of duty and

exemplary courage of our navy ought to have resounded in his speech, but not a sorry comparison between the Russian Revolution and our fleet."

If mistakes like Michaelis' were to be avoided, then, as Stresemann pointed out in an article, the parties must realize that a mere change in the Chancellorship would bring no improvement. For if the new Chancellor encountered the same difficulties as his predecessor, if important parties still remained in opposition, the situation would remain the same. The two middle parties, the National Liberals and the Center, strongly insisted on the creation of a firmly defined program, which to some extent would bind both the Chancellor and the parties. The latter would not be able to make demands outside that program, but would be content if it were carried out. Thus national unity would be reëstablished. In that way Stresemann hoped to secure harmonious coöperation between government and parliament, to reconstitute the home front, and to ensure that the successes in the field would not be weakened by internal dissension.

That was the basis from which the inter-party discussions set out. "A truce to conflicts and crises. Forward into a time of sober and practical work! That after all was the guiding thought,

which made us wish to meet together once more."

The weakness of the Government and the Chancellor's blunders had endangered the political situation at home. The Emperor had allowed three years to go by before he consented to see the party leaders, and gradually the Imperial Crown came to have as little sentimental value as actual political power. The home front was always exposed to new dangers. To counter these, Stresemann wished to relax the restraints on the workers' right of association, at least to some extent, even if great reforms could not be quickly provided. He advocated in the Reichstag that the Professional and Trades Unions, whose members "are in no way surpassed, in patriotism, by other sections of the Community," should be freed from political restrictions. For the restrictions were used to stifle the free expression of opinion, and produced subterranean opposition.

The differences which rent the German people on internal reforms and war aims divided the National Liberal Party. There was an extreme right wing and an extreme left wing; only a small fraction aimed at a middle policy, and Stresemann was at its head.

Such were the circumstances under which Stresemann, after Bassermann's death on September

23rd, 1917, assumed the vice-presidency of the Central Executive, and on September 28th the chairmanship of the party.

During 1917 the question of the conditions on which a victorious Germany would make peace became of immediate importance. Before the collapse of Russia Stresemann pointed out, on the occasion of the answer to the Papal Note, that thenceforth the 19th of July, the date of the Peace Resolution, was replaced by the 19th of September, for on that date freedom of action had been restored to the German Government. Though it must be remembered that the declaration of September 19th was based on the July Resolution, Stresemann had voted for it, "because we are not waging a war of conquest and are quite agreed with the Chancellor that the war should not be continued for a single day, so soon as the enemy is ready to negotiate with us."

To Stresemann the general peace aims were still the same as at the beginning of the war: a peace far removed from a lust for annexation, but giving Germany security. In the Reichstag Stresemann expressed the view that he could never regard it as a gain if non-German-speaking nationalities were added to the German Empire in the east or west, unless vital exigencies of mili-

tary safety made this imperative. But what he wished to attain, and considered a demand of honor, was the protection of German nationality, which had hitherto been suppressed by neighboring states.

On the Belgian question he believed that history proved that nationalities do not persist unchanged for ever, but that a progressive development takes place in the course of time. He pointed to the fact that Liége, at the Vienna Congress, had asked to become German, that German genius spoke from the altar at Ghent, from the city halls and belfries of Antwerp and Bruges, that the Fuggers and Welsers had meant to Flanders what Hapag and Lloyd mean to it today. The Flemings had spontaneously demanded liberation from the pressure of the French Belgians. Hence, in Stresemann's opinion, it was the duty of Germany to assist a kindred race to attain its freedom, and not to hinder it in its national impulses, as had happened at the time of the occupation. With regard to the Belgian question only one thing mattered to Stresemann, namely, that Belgium must cease in the future to be an outwork of England. A settlement had to be found which would give Germany the freedom of the seas in the sense Stresemann had outlined

in 1914. Freedom of the seas did not mean superior rights, but equal rights with other nations.

The great eastern questions were opened by the Russian Revolution and the Peace of Brest-Litowsk. At that time, according to Stresemann, Germany had lost her freedom of choice. The proclamation of the Kingdom of Poland had tied her hands. The National Liberal Party had protested in vain against the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland. Now it was a matter of salvaging what could still be saved. All the thanks Germany received from the Poles was the Polish Deputy Stychel's statement that Poland would have earned the contempt of the whole world if she had fought on the German side. It was rather the settlement of a point of honor, when Stresemann replied: "I have never yet heard of a people bringing upon itself the contempt of the whole world, through fighting for its freedom even with its blood." It was clear what was to be expected from Poland, when her representatives in the German Reichstag openly laid claim to territory which was part of the German Reich and inhabited by Germans. The policy of Hoetsch and Georg Bernhard was to keep Russia intact, with a view to the conclusion of a conti-

nental pact with the Soviet Government. Stresemann countered by pointing to the already accomplished fact of Poland's separation. Russia had declared in favor of the right of nationalities to independence, and one had to see that her deeds corresponded with her words. The right of self-determination had been expressly acknowledged by the Soviet Government, even to the extent of allowing certain peoples to break away from Russia. The Balts had already declared in favor of separation. To bring those territories into a protective relationship with Germany had been the aim of the democrats as early as 1848, and when they declared themselves independent, Stresemann could see "that ancient German soil" under the protection of the Reich, and the University of Dorpat awakening to renewed intellectual life. The Balts had recognized the mistake they had made in the past, when they had based their German nationality too exclusively on the large ownership of land, and had already offered one-third of their landed property for settlement by German peasants. Thus the hope was justified that traditional German territory would be won back, and land and work found for the returning soldiers, thanks to the voluntary sacrifices of these German landowners. The most important

thing was to get a free hand in the west to enforce the conclusion of the war. Stresemann viewed the Peace of Brest primarily from that point of view. Then even the Social Democratic Party rejected the Peace Resolution when another kind of peace became possible, and a by-election in Niederbarnim showed their attitude to be in agreement with the feelings of the working class. All this proved to Stresemann that his own policy and that of the National Liberal Party had been a logical and consistent one, not tied down to theories and flying to resolutions in moments of weakness (which were cast aside when victory seemed probable) but determined from the outset to extract from each turn of fortune whatever could serve Germany's interests.

Stresemann viewed the peace with the Ukraine solely as a means to ending the war. He described it as the "Bread Treaty," since its object was to safeguard the food supplies which Germany needed to hold out till victory came. The quarter of an hour, spoken of by Clemenceau, which should prove which side possessed the better nerve, had come. In the spring of 1918 the armies prepared, so it was hoped, for the last decisive blow. Stresemann knew Germany's actual position. But reflection regarding the right

policy led him to that saying of Frederick the Great: "Whatever keeps one up, is right." Hence, when Kühlmann, at the very moment when the armies were about to undergo new and terrible sacrifices, made the dangerous assertion that victory could not be won by force of arms, Stresemann countered as follows, in the *Deutsche Stimmen:* "Throughout the history of the world you will never find a political or military strategist who, on the eve of great decisions, weakened the soldiers' will to victory instead of rousing it to the highest pitch. When Hannibal was returning to his tent after his conversation with Scipio before the battle of Zama, his thought probably dwelt on the poisoned ring which subsequently killed that indefatigable fighter against Rome at the Court of King Prusias of Bithynia. His prospect of gaining a victory was very remote, so far as human judgment could tell. But when he stood face to face with his army, he conjured up before them the certainty of victory, he spoke to his old soldiers and his new fighting-men, and urged them on once more to save the fortunes of Carthage and retain their faith in his ever-victorious generalship. To take another scene from history: Walter von Molo has depicted the great Prussian king, attacking an enemy many times his superior

in strength. His heart was wrung at the thought of enormously superior artillery facing him on well-nigh impregnable mountain ridges. A report was brought that part of his army had capitulated. His Minister of State and his own brother implored him on bended knees to conclude peace at any price. He received tidings that his capital had been occupied by the enemy. His quarters were invaded by insurgent soldiers, and, as if to break him utterly, the news came of the death of his dearly loved sister. Nevertheless the spirit of resolution vanquished all the doubts that assailed him, and he issued one watchword and one battle-cry for the decisive battle: 'Victory and certain triumph!' That is how the generals of all ages have acted—from the wars with spears and swords to the wars with motors and hand-grenades. Never yet have statesmen, on the eve of decisive struggles which will affect the fate of the world, expressed doubts as to their own victory, while all the world was listening."

Stresemann liked to withdraw from the pessimistic atmosphere of Berlin into the country, where faith in Germany's future and in the victory of her arms was undiminished. He continually pointed out, in his articles and speeches, that it was a mistake to base one's judgment of a situ-

ation upon the views prevailing among a nervous city population. So late as August, 1918, he wrote from the sunny island of Rügen, far from the quickly changing, superficial impressions of the metropolis. There he saw with his mind's eye the doubting Frederick, weighing the pros and cons of his position, wavering this way and that, distraught between strong faith and anxious cares and at last speaking the clear word: "Whatever keeps one up, is right." "Hence," Stresemann continues, "even if things are bad, strong faith and joyful optimism will be right. And even doubting reason will be able, balancing conditions in the enemy countries against those prevailing among us, to furnish the optimism allied to strong faith as its foundation, once we have learned rightly to estimate what has been achieved, and to rejoice at what has already been created for Germany's future by those achievements."

And to those who wished to prove by the laws of logic that the war was bound to be lost, he replied that, by the laws of logic, Russia ought to have smashed Germany in 1914, seeing that she had placed her armies on a war footing without Germany's knowledge. That, by the same laws, Hindenburg should have been defeated at the Masurian Lakes, and Germany starved out of

raw materials and foodstuffs at the end of two years. By the laws of logic, Germany's destiny was sealed when Roumania declared war upon her. And yet Germany had carried on the war for four years on enemy soil. He believed as firmly as ever that "it is the spirit which molds the clay." That is why in October, 1918, he voted in favor of the National Liberal Party's joining the Prussian Government—a sacrifice no less great for the National Liberals than for the Social Democrats, since it meant their assuming the burdens of the previous régime, the heritage bequeathed by Bethmann, Michaelis and Hertling.

After Burian's peace note and Bulgaria's defection, the position was desperate. At home it was no longer possible to adopt the way out provided by a coalition government, including Conservatives and Social Democrats, since the latter could not, after their election promises, undertake such a burden. The Conservatives had not heeded sufficiently the signs of the times. Stresemann himself felt the breakdown of the old Government and had little hope of help from the Conservatives. On the causes of the breakdown of the old Government, he wrote on August 21, in the *Deutsche Stimmen,* that the old Reich had not provided during the World War what the

German people had had a right to expect of its institutions. It had neither established connection between the spirit of the people and a strong external leadership, nor had it harnessed the industrial powers of the nation for the most terrible war Germany has ever waged. Lloyd George as Munitions Minister had accomplished more for England, than Germany had done before the Hindenburg program. The construction of submarines had been neglected, and many other mistakes had been made which would cost a heavy price. One had only to look at the external position to answer the question whether the Government had satisfied legitimate demands. "The call for parliamentary government was the outcry of the German people against the breakdown of its diplomacy." A new form of government had arrived. Whether it would stand the test was yet to be seen. But it would not have come, unless there had previously been an inward breakdown of what had hitherto seemed to the German people the highest achievement of statecraft. It was open to question whether that breakdown was due to faulty organization or to the absence of strong men, but the breakdown as such could not be denied.

Stresemann reported, in 1921 in the *Deutsche*

Stimmen, on that critical October 1st, 1918, when the party leaders were officially notified of the situation:

"On October 1st, 1918, at an early morning hour, I received an invitation from the Vice-Chancellor von Payer, to attend a political conference. On my way to the Chancellor's room in the Reichstag I passed one of the ministers, who had evidently been to a conference before that to which the party leaders were invited. He said to me at the door of the conference-room: 'All is lost.' The conference took place under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor von Payer, and after his brief introductory remarks, a representative of the army command reported upon the military situation. He stated briefly the conviction of the army command that the fight could no longer be carried on with prospect of success, that the losses were constantly increasing, and that therefore a request for an armistice and peace must immediately be made. This communication found the party leaders wholly unprepared. It is true, we knew the difficulties of the military situation, and had been told at a conference called by von Hintze on August 23rd, that the Foreign Office was putting out feelers, and that we must be prepared for a bad peace. It is incorrect to

represent the army command as having shown complete confidence of victory so late as the summer of 1918. In June, 1918, after the first successes of the spring offensive, the situation, as described to me by a representative of the army command, was that we had reached the zenith of our military efficiency, and any further prolongation of the war might reverse the position. Being thus aware of the real facts, I stated in June, 1918, in the Reichstag, that the National Liberal Party would agree to peace even if the war aims were not all attained—a clear indication that we would support any peace move. After the losses in the July battle, the army command made no secret with these persons in close touch with them, of the difficult position they were in.

"Although, in spite of reports of the Berlin press, I never went to Bulgaria as a representative of the army command—and do not know what qualifications I have for such a mission—nevertheless I had opportunities of ascertaining the views of the army leaders. Hence I was fully aware of the gravity of the military situation, but was profoundly shocked none the less by the report submitted on that morning of October 1st. It meant that we had to accept Wilson's Fourteen Points, which entailed the loss of Alsace-Lorraine,

left the fate of our colonies undecided, and surrendered parts of the eastern frontiers to the Poles. But still we could not understand why, despite the daily increasing difficulty of the military situation, the offer should be made so precipitately to Wilson, and our military defeat acknowledged before the world. We all gained the impression that decisions had been come to at Headquarters, showing a sudden change to the deepest pessimism, where confidence in the successful defense of our frontiers ought to have been preserved in the darkest hours.

"We were afraid that this step would produce a crushing effect, especially at home, and the concluding sentences of the army report, stating that unacceptable conditions for the armistice or the peace would induce the army to continue fighting, gave us little ground for hope. So far as we knew, peace-feelers had been extended since the end of August, and the preliminaries to armistice and peace negotiations ought not to have been taken in the form they were. Doubt as to the correctness of our information struggled in our minds with the suspicion that the men of the Supreme Army Command, who had for years performed superhuman feats and placed their nervous strength unreservedly at the disposal of the

fatherland, had perhaps lost their heads at the very moment in the last phase of the struggle, when spiritual endurance was all-important. For all my deep emotion at the communication received from the Supreme Army Command, I wrote a few lines immediately after the conference and while still under its impressions, to the Secretary of State von Hintze, informing him that, in spite of all we had heard, I could not agree to support the peace offer.

"To begin with, silence had been enjoined on the party leaders, respecting the communications made to them. A few days later the peace offer became known to the public, and the tremendous excitement it aroused demanded expression by the leaders. The National Liberal Party summoned its district presidents and general secretaries to a meeting in Berlin on October 13th, in order to report to them upon the situation. Still under the impression of the events of October 1st, I made my report and spoke my mind as to the reasons which had led to such an ending of the war."

Stresemann's fighting mood did not leave him even in the October days of 1918. When Wilson's reply to the German peace offer arrived, he wrote, as chairman of a party supporting the Gov-

ernment, that the latest and disgraceful calumny of the German character, contained in the American note which had just arrived, called for energetic official denial, which should not be couched in cautious and defensive terms. To be effective, the reply of the German Government ought to point out to Wilson with the same outspokenness which he himself so successfully employed, that if his heart were breaking at the sufferings of a humanity in the throes of war, it had been in his hands for the past fortnight to put a speedy end to them. If he delayed and imperiled the work of peace by continued attempts at humiliation, then he alone must bear the full responsibility for all the hurt inflicted upon combatants and non-combatants, during the further duration of the war.

It seemed to him a ray of light amidst all the misfortunes, that Austria still maintained her confidence in the German Empire and had resolved to unite with Germany. If thereafter the world was to reshape itself on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, then Germany should stand shoulder to shoulder with German Austria. Amid all the gloom of these days Germany was not to overlook that ray of light upon the horizon.

In that dark time for Germany, Stresemann attained to Goethe's faith, when he cried: "Across graves, onward!" He remembered the deep confidence enshrined in Jacobsen's Hymn of Niel, and wrote: "We do not wish to be among those who, weary with pain, let the world go its way. With braced energies and watchful sympathy, we want to harken to the distant sounds which betoken a change in the times. We want to watch for the last faint gleam which may bring us the fulfillment of what we still hope, in spite of everything, for a future of Germany, and, in spite of our enemies, we want to cling, with a still deeper reverence in our hearts, to the ideas which we once justly cherished."

CHAPTER VI

REVOLUTION; FOUNDATION OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE'S PARTY; NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WHEN, on November 9th about nine A.M. Stresemann entered his room on the second story of the Reichstag building, he saw on the river-bank outside the first outward signs of the Revolution: a crowd of men, women and girls forming into processions, to manifest "the will of the people," in the Wilhelmstrasse and outside the Reichstag.

A meeting of the inter-Party executives had been called for that morning, but had been canceled at Stresemann's suggestion, in the absence of the Social Democrats. Moreover the time seemed past for such consultations. The Party leaders went in a body to the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, to discuss the situation with him. At the Chancellor's Palace they waited in vain; the Prince could not be seen. He was negotiating with the Social Democrats alone. The

result of these negotiations was made known to the leaders of the middle class parties through a special edition of a newspaper, in which the abdication of the Emperor and the Crown Prince was announced, together with the fact that Max of Baden had entrusted the leader of the Social Democrats, Ebert, with the conduct of affairs. The Imperial Chancellor had neither the time nor the inclination to confer in person with the leaders of the middle class parties.

On his way back to the Reichstag Stresemann saw the motor cars, filled with shouting sailors and adorned with red flags; and while the Party assembled in the Reichstag for the last meeting of the old Parliament, the Imperial Secretary of State was proclaiming the Republic outside, and speeches and cheers for the new State could be heard. The final resolution of the party meeting presided over by Stresemann, was to the effect that the new Government could only be regarded as provisional. Nevertheless, in the interests of the State and in conformity with National Liberal principles, the party decided not to boycott it if the Provisional Government desired their collaboration, but forbade any member of the party to accept office. In the afternoon the Reichstag was occupied by the "Red Workers' Guard," and the

people's representatives were removed by order of the people's commissaries from the building where they were trying to do their duty in the people's interests. When Stresemann left, the only deputy remaining in the Reichstag was the National Liberal, Prince von Schönaich-Carolath.

On the following Sunday another meeting of the leaders of the middle class parties was held at the house of Vice-Chancellor Payer, and at that meeting they bade farewell to the old Germany, and to their joint labors, with only uncertain hopes that the National Assembly would offer an opportunity for building up the State anew.

At that time Stresemann wrote an article in the *Deutsche Stimmen* on "The Revolution," which ended with certain reflections on the death of two men whose names had meant much in the old Germany; Albert Ballin and Count Schwerin-Loewitz. Referring to Count Schwerin-Loewitz, a representative of the Old Prussian Conservative mentality, he quoted these words from the Apology of Socrates[1]: "My own approaching end has not happened by mere chance. But I saw clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble;

[1] [Jowett's translation.—Trs.]

. . . The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows." That was the underlying note in the minds of all those who, without acclaiming the 9th of November, watched the breakdown of the old Empire, uncertain what would arise in its place, and oppressed by the recollection of recent happenings in Soviet Russia. But it was not like Stresemann to spend his time in idle resignation.

When the parliamentary reforms were being taken in hand, he had concluded one of his articles on current history, with Goethe's words, "Onward, even across graves!" and his first big speech delivered after the Revolution, on December 19th, 1918, at Osnabrück, ended on this note: "We have to sow for a distant future. With Goethe we say, 'Onward, even across graves!' Onward into the future! Let our people be ever conscious that it is working for a time to come. While the world's hatred rages round us, let us cling to what has been left of the old ideals of the past. Let us carry them with us into a new age. Let us profess our faith in Germany's renascence."

It could not be denied that mistakes had been committed under the old system, and Stresemann

openly acknowledged them, realizing that mere excuses would avail nothing. He was able to do so quite frankly, since the National Liberal Party had criticized the faults of the old régime more clearly and objectively than any other party in the Reichstag, and had striven hard for their removal.

When questions were asked after the *Daily Telegraph* interview, Bassermann had been among the most searching critics. During the war Stresemann had pointed out, in season and out of season, that the states with parliamentary government had succeeded better than Germany in ensuring collaboration between government, parliament and people, that even the organization of the war had been better accomplished by such amateurs in European warfare as England and the United States.

He had insisted that the call for the introduction of the parliamentary system was the outcry of the German people against the breakdown of its diplomacy. At the time when, during the war, the new parliamentary form of government was adopted—and this was largely due to Stresemann's efforts—he acknowledged that parliamentary government had been made possible, even inevitable, by the breakdown of what had been

regarded in Germany as the highest statecraft. Whether the system collapsed owing to inherent flaws in its structure, or because of a lack of strong men, he left undecided. But even in October, 1918, he saw that the collapse was coming. But what collapsed on the 9th of November was the ideal of Democracy. It was relatively unimportant that monarchs were swept away, compared with the fact that a parliamentary, democratic government was replaced by the rule of the six Socialist commissaries. Hence Stresemann saw no reason why the Democrats should acclaim the 9th of November, which shattered their own ideals. But there was still less reason for him and the National Liberals to acclaim it. All the faults of the old régime, in Stresemann's opinion, weighed as nothing compared with the revolutionary riot of November and December, 1918. Neukölln [2] declared itself an independent Republic and refused to accept commands from the Reich Government. Adolf Hoffmann banned Christmas trees from the schools, as a symbol of reaction. In Berlin the troops and the Students' Guard, formed to protect the Government, were disarmed, while Liebknecht's adherents were allowed to drive through the town in armored cars,

[2] A suburb of Berlin.

and could handle the so-called Government troops exactly as they pleased. Outside in the streets, battles were taking place against officers' unions suspected of being reactionary, while thousands of German citizens with their wives and children were starving because the Entente would not suspend the blockade. But Berlin was dancing as though there were cause for special celebration. To any one who loved his fatherland as Stresemann did, the aching thought might well occur: "The time has come for us to go." The "Republic of Neukölln" looked uncommonly like a joke, but it was a symptom of more serious troubles which were lurking in the background. Shortly before the Revolution Stresemann had uttered a warning against the dethronement of the Emperor and the Crown Prince. He did not wish to contribute to the overthrow of the old ideals which had once made up to Germany in spiritual greatness what she lacked in power. He did not wish to sacrifice lightly what had been the hope of half a century, and the symbol of national aspiration. When Emperor and throne had fallen, Stresemann proclaimed in the first great manifesto of the German People's Party, in February, 1919, that he would not withhold his help from the Republic. But he did not conceal that

he was an opponent of the Revolution, and that there was no room in his heart for sentiments which welcomed the 9th of November and regarded it as a turning-point in German history. He bade his listeners remember the past: the Great Elector, who turned his gaze across the seas and saw possible colonies for his little country; Frederick William I, under whom Prussia began, through self-denial, to ascend to greatness; Frederick the Great, at whose name Goethe's father first felt the power of the German ideal; and finally the Great Emperor, who had accomplished the unification of the Reich. Even for the last German Kaiser he found words which it did one good to hear at such a time, for when the Kaiser had ceased to be dangerous, every one heaped scorn and abuse upon him. "He may have erred," said Stresemann, "in many respects, his ways were not always the right ones; but therein he was like all men, even all great men, to whom infallibility has not been given. But his intentions were pure and noble, his efforts inspired by a wish to serve his country. If we must bid farewell to a period which, for half a century, has brought us great and imperishable things, then let us at least make our farewells worthily and reverently, and reject the insults con-

ceived by base minds, which are now hurled at the last holder of the Imperial Crown."

Stresemann has been charged with opportunism. But his opportunism seemed to consist of opposing the policy of the day on principle. At a time when the Empire and the Supreme Army Command were still in full power, he did not stint his criticism of both institutions, whenever he thought it necessary. But so soon as William II and Ludendorff were divested of power and the target of universal scorn, he broke a lance in their defense. The fact that he has earned no thanks from either, troubles him not at all. The issue is not one of persons, but of German history, of psychological and spiritual conceptions which divide the old from the new. He wished to salvage those treasures of the mind which had belonged to the old era, so as to help him in his labors on behalf of the new. "We are travelers between two worlds." Such was Stresemann's conviction.

It is natural that he should be understood least by those who had once been parasites of the Empire and were now parasites of the Republic. Vice-Chancellor Schiffer sneered at him as a champion of monarchy, and asked him why he had not kept to the barricades. This was because he

did not understand the deeper meaning of what appeared outwardly as a defense of the monarchy. Above the idea of the monarchy was the idea of the people. Nothing but further bloodshed could possibly have reintroduced the monarchy. But assuredly Stresemann had no such intention. He did not wish to turn the wheel of history backwards, he only wanted to make a stand against the contempt for principle, which flaunted itself during the days of the Revolution. Thus he was deeply grieved because Germany did not bear the misfortune which assailed her, with dignity. He noted with disappointment that forty-eight hours after the outbreak of the Revolution the *Kreuzzeitung* deleted the circular inscription round the cross—"With God for King and Country"—to which it owed its name. He thought it pitiful that the red flag should wave over the buildings of the capital, and delegates of charitable organizations, who had carefully collected decorations during the war, suddenly behaved like fierce revolutionaries. Every one disclaimed all connection with the old State, every one put the blame on some one else. Things were at such a pass that some of the Social Democrats would express no opinion at all until they had cast a furtive glance in the direction of the In-

dependents. It seemed as though the only persons in the whole Reich not incriminated were Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who had voted against war credits from the very first.

Stresemann took the opposite line. He sought to raise the self-respect of the German people, For no nation without self-respect and faith in its own future could win the respect of other nations. What saddened him most was the insult flung at the old army, which had sunk to the ground, weighed down with military glory. No other people, said Stresemann, who had accomplished such deeds as Germany had in the World War, would have been capable of dragging its own flag into the mire, of tearing the badges from the caps of its returning soldiers. No other nation with a corps of officers like the German officers, would have been capable of so insulting them. The lack of dignity with which the Revolution proceeded against the national sentiment of the German people, appeared to him the greatest danger to the future and to the spiritual rebirth of the nation. He pointed to the French Revolution, whose leaders had drawn from the downfall of old systems the strength for a new national advance, for the creation of new armies against the foreign enemy. The Revolution had

been largely due to the belief of the revolutionaries that a new Germany would be able to make peace on the terms suggested by Wilson. Stresemann hoped that if this expectation were deceived, the nation would be willing to continue the fight on the German frontiers. "In that case," he said, "every Monarchist would have been bound to pay tribute to such a national Revolution."

Stresemann was attacked for having entertained illusions about the war. In reply, he admitted that he had hoped for a German victory, and not been ashamed of it. If it were a crime to have believed that the German arms would win the war, and that peace would rise out of their victory, then he was guilty of that "crime" in common with millions of the best in the nation, and with men of nearly all parties. When others spoke of the "war illusionists" he would counter with the "illusionists of pacifism," who believed that as soon as Germany surrendered her arms and humbled herself, she would secure a just peace. When Scheidemann said one should guard against squandering the spiritual treasure of the Revolution, it seemed to Stresemann more important to protect the treasure of the Empire from squandering by the revolutionaries, for German

orderliness, industry and sense of duty were worth preserving. They were almost all Germany had left, and yet she might still with their help assert her power in the future. That a revolution may shape history, was quite obvious. Stresemann did not fail to recognize the good intentions of a man like Ebert. Even in 1917, during a debate on the naval mutiny, Stresemann said: "Every one who knows the character of Deputy Ebert, is aware how little he loves conflict, how much he favors a dispassionate conduct of affairs."

But where the Revolution might have worked creatively, it failed. In the Austrian question the new Government concentrated on petty financial and economic negotiations and so missed the right moment. It could have created a *fait accompli* by clinching the Austro-German Union before the peace treaties had been drafted. That was the idea which Stresemann tried to further, and he recognized that the creation of a Greater Germany including German Austria, was only possible on a Republican basis. The union of Germany with German Austria appeared to him the one ray of light amid the prevailing gloom. "Their temperament differs in some particulars from ours," he stated in the manifesto of the German People's Party, of February, 1919, "they

have more repose of mind than we, who have been driven by economic development to a hasty and restless life, hard work and fierce enjoyment. We should rejoice if the spirit of the Germans in Austria should be wedded to ours, for we cannot deny the fact that as Germany became economically richer and more powerful, she became spiritually impoverished. The new Germany, which had so much that was impressive in strength and power, had lost the type of man whose aim it was to develop his entire personality. Their place had been taken by the specialist, wholly absorbed in his work in some special field, who did not recognize the necessity of developing all one's spiritual faculties. Our friends in Austria are mistaken if they believe that we do not respond to the cordiality of their feelings towards us. We bless the day on which German Austria will unite with Germany."

During the first months of the Revolution the fight against Walther Rathenau on the question of the economic reconstruction grew sharper. In his essay, "State Socialism and a Free Economic Order," Stresemann opposed Rathenau's ideas. Briefly he sums up his standpoint as follows: "If we had directed our economic development in 1871, by means of a central coöperative purchas-

ing body, we should not have made the rapid strides we did."

Rathenau advocated the National organization of all economic activities, both of production and distribution, and favored the complete elimination of the small independent producer, especially the small trader. Stresemann believed that a spiritual revival of Germany could be expected from the middle class in town and country, and from the small independent traders. He recognized in the worker's demand for socialization an unwillingness to work for an entrepreneur, and a desire to share in the profits of labor. That was why he suggested at the meeting of the Central Executive of the German People's Party, in February, 1919, that the question should be examined, to what extent it was possible to let the worker participate in an undertaking, without taking the responsible direction out of the hands of the men who bore the risk. He wished to counter the exasperating statement that when he had shared in creating a product, the worker had no further part in it, by making the Reich a joint-owner of all undertakings. In that way taxes would be collected at the fountain-head, whilst individuals would not be despoiled of all their possessions by a wholly disproportionate

taxation. For he regarded the crippling of personal initiative by suppressing the inducement to gain as dangerous to the work of reconstruction with which Germany was faced. This work could only be accomplished through the confidence which existed abroad in German industry and German commercial enterprise. The confidence still possessed by the individual employer, even when the Reich had already begun to lose credit abroad, must not, he considered, be broken down but, on the contrary, in the general interest, it should be exploited to the full. The military and political power had collapsed and there was no question of reaching the level of the enemy States for some time to come, but Stresemann saw then that the economic weakening of the enemy States through the War was bound to tell shortly, and that German production formed the basis on which the nation could again rise to a position of importance in the world.

Stresemann's conflict with Rathenau was waged in the economic sphere. In reality, however, its roots went deeper. The real issue was that of the fundamental principle on which Germany's revival was to proceed. Both Stresemann and Rathenau sought to discover the most valuable forces of the people for that revival. Rathenau

believed that they were to be sought in the German talent for organization under State tutelage, Stresemann looked for them in the creative powers of the individual. While the fight raged around these principles, a struggle of a deeper nature concerned the question of whether Germany's revival was to be accomplished by the Socialist ideology or by that of the middle class which was rooted in Hanseatic ideas. The opposition was between democratic and liberal ideas, and Stresemann did not wish the Liberal principle to be regarded as synonymous with *laissez faire*. He believed it was expressed in the views and actions of the National Liberal Party, in the formula: Social not Socialistic. These theoretical differences, which are important to-day as we look back upon them, were then of less value compared with practical demands of the time. Stresemann was no stickler for theory. He had often censured the doctrinaire standpoint of the Social Democratic party. The practical consideration seemed to him more important, *viz.*, whether it was possible to unite the Liberal middle class in opposition to the growing tide of Socialism.

The National Liberal Party of the old era had not been homogeneous, but had represented a cross-section of the ideas of the non-Conservative

middle class. It had included a left wing, which might generally be said to have adhered to the ideas of the former Liberal Association; it had members with strong affinities to socialistic ideas, or which at any rate was aiming at close touch with the Socialist Party; it had others who clung to evangelical ideas, as the Center party clung to Catholicism, and finally a right wing, which aimed at forming a bridge to conservatism. These internal political contrasts were bridged over by a strong national sense and the unifying will to serve the real interests of the Reich, whatever they might be. In the concept "Liberal" there was diversity, in the concept "National" there was complete unity, and the National element was strong enough to exercise a predominant influence.

Before the breakdown, the experiences of the war had awakened a wish for close union between the various sections of Liberalism. On the agenda of a meeting of the Central Executive of the National Liberal Party, convened for November 17th, was a motion by Dr. Riesser, proposing negotiations for the amalgamation of the two leading sections. The 9th of November stopped all that for the time being. Later, however, the negotiations were resolutely taken up again.

They led to no result, and even to-day German Liberalism is suffering from the fact that it is divided into two separate camps. It is necessary in the interests of German political history, perhaps even of history in general, to ascertain the truth about what occurred and to apportion the blame. To this end we must dispose of certain favorite legends which grew up out of the strife of factions, and which were current especially during the first years after the war. Those legends propagated the idea that union would have been achieved had not Stresemann's ambition stood in the way. He had immediately given his adhesion to the Democratic Party, but had made his support contingent on a seat being found for himself. When that condition was refused, his wounded *amour propre* had induced him to found the German People's Party, and thus the great idea had been frustrated. Obviously the Democratic Party could not have acceded to Stresemann's demand, as they could not make common cause with a person so deeply compromised by the war.

That is the Democratic statement of what happened in 1919 and 1920. When these attacks were becoming unbearable, Stresemann wrote to his colleague Fischbeck, who had presided over

the negotiations, and immediately received from him the written confirmation that there was no word of truth in the story.

In the upshot, the two Liberal parties, largely for petty reasons, failed to join forces. The German Democratic Party was founded, whose sharply Republican and ultra-pacifist program was inacceptable to Stresemann and his followers. Hence it was decided to carry on the National Liberal Party as the German People's Party. Name and tradition of the Party, the flag of Bennigsen and Bassermann, were thus preserved. The Party entered the electoral struggle under adverse conditions. Apart from the *Kölnische Zeitung,* the *Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Tägliche Rundschau* it could name scarcely one leading organ of its own. Never had the Democratic Party conducted an electoral fight with stronger support from the general public, for millions believed that they must support the Democrats in order to counter social democracy. Whole tracts of the country had gone over to the Democrats, notably Baden, Württemberg and Bavaria. As the *Reichsliste* did not yet exist, Stresemann had to contest the large electoral district of Osnabrück in order to win a seat, and therefore could not devote himself to building

up the party. A deputy of the Democratic Party, very well known to-day, estimated that the German People's Party might secure five seats. The Party fought without contact between its members. The leaders in many cases did not know where candidates had been put up. The General Secretary, who ought to have directed matters, was himself contesting a Hanoverian constituency, and had not the old tradition been maintained in some measure in the Rhineland, in Westphalia, in Eastern Saxony, in East Prussia and in Hanover, no one could have expected the Party to survive. Under those circumstances it must be regarded as a success when the Party emerged from the elections with one and a half million votes. That signified a gain of twenty-two seats in the National Assembly.

The Assembly had been convened at Weimar, in order to illustrate the contrast between the spirit of Weimar and the "damned spirit of Potsdam." In an article in the *Deutsche Stimmen* Stresemann pointed out that it had only been possible to create the Reich, by combining the humanist spirit for which Weimar stands, with the sense of duty and patriotism connected with Potsdam, and the Reich could be preserved in future only by the same means. What the future would

bring was still shrouded in mystery, and Stresemann was deeply moved by the words of Iphigenia, which, given at a special performance on the opening day of the National Assembly, seemed specially addressed to the members: "The Gods avert their eyes from whole generations, and avoid beholding in the grandson his ancestor's once-loved, mutely eloquent features." At Weimar Stresemann bade his party recall another sentence from Goethe, a sentence which expressed the spiritual justification of their existence at a time when Demos was being placed on the throne. "The greatest gift of human kind is personality."

Stresemann took a relatively small part in the proceedings of the National Assembly. The lively squabbles of the parliamentarians, which often enough produced reproaches and attacks by the parties against one another while great aims were ignored, was not the sort of thing to attract him. Moreover at that time, his health was so enfeebled by his bodily and mental exertions that, after Germany's peaceful development had been to some extent ensured, he went to Switzerland for a time, to prepare in solitude for new labors. He only addressed the National Assembly, to urge basic principles, on the two main questions which it had to solve: the Peace Treaty and the Constitution.

He had anticipated the Peace Treaty with special apprehensions, because in addition to the diplomatic and military breakdown, the public morale had gone to pieces. If public opinion in Germany would make it clear to Wilson and the Entente—such was his view, expressed as early as October, 1918—that the Germans were too resolute a nation to accept a dishonorable peace, it was to be hoped that the enemy states would keep their peace proposals within the bounds of moderation, fearing a revulsion of feeling among their own peoples if hostilities had to be resumed. He deplored the fact that political psychology had always been Germany's weakest point and thought it suicidal when Social-Democratic and Democratic newspapers were writing in November, 1918, that any resistance by Germany to the Armistice and peace conditions, no matter what they might be, would be futile. Stresemann thought that the crucial stage of the peace negotiations was the pourparlers in the Forest of Compiègne, when Germany threw down her arms. And when the Peace Treaty was submitted at Versailles, and Scheidemann observed that the world had lost another illusion and was the poorer for it, Stresemann remembered Carthage. When Haussmann declared: "If we had had an inkling of such peace

conditions, we should not have disarmed our forces," Stresemann replied: "Germany's cry of anguish at the present hour is drowned by Hannibal's sardonic laughter: *'then* should ye have wept, when our arms were taken, and our ships, when we were forbidden to wage war against the foreigner, for that is the wound wherewith we are smitten.' "

Stresemann began his great speech on the Peace Treaty (in the National Assembly, May 12th, 1919) with the statement that the peace was dishonoring not to the vanquished but to the victor, and would be so even had Germany been obliged to throw herself entirely on the mercy of her enemies. Even then such a Peace Treaty would have been "an orgy of political sadism." But Germany had agreed to the Armistice under quite definite conditions, solemnly proclaimed before the whole world, and in face of those conditions that Peace Treaty was the greatest fraud that history could show. He recalled Scheidemann's saying: "Woe to the people that discards its weapons too soon!" and continued: "We laid aside our arms, prompted by the idealism of the great majority of the German People who firmly trusted in international promises. If that trust has been deceived, if there is talk on the other side of this

House of burying illusions, then it is a mockery all the more bitter that in one passage of the Treaty the Allies' task is stated to be the restoration of harmony throughout the world. Harmony, produced by such a Treaty! This Treaty makes of Germany a dismembered Empire, without power, without rights, without honor, condemned for all times to serfdom, ruled by foreign nations as slave drivers. It is possible we may be ruined if we do not sign the Treaty. But we all have this feeling: it is certain we shall be ruined if we do sign it."

At first there was some hope that the National Assembly would refuse to sign the Treaty. The spontaneity with which, on the 12th of May, the entire house, with the exception of the Independents, acclaimed Scheidemann's verdict: "Unacceptable!" by rising from their seats, is regarded by Stresemann as one of the greatest moments he has ever witnessed. Another great experience was the concluding speech of Fehrenbach, "who was inspired in that hour by God to say what was felt by the German people. His words, spoken under Fichte's portrait, the final words which merged in 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,' made it an unforgettably solemn hour; there was in that scene a kind of uplifting grandeur. The impres-

sion left on all was tremendous." Stresemann concluded his description of the session with these words from Fichte: "Vanquished we are; but it depends upon ourselves whether we are at the same time despised and justly despised, and, in addition to all other losses, lose honor."

The ensuing weeks, characterized by the antagonism between Erzberger and Brockdorff-Rantzau, by Erzberger's efforts to undo Rantzau's manly words by a loud whisper of: "We shall sign none the less in any case," seemed to Stresemann to portend evil. And he almost immediately published an article under the title: "The Bitter End."

Stresemann expressed in no uncertain terms his views on the question of the extradition of the Kaiser and the German army leaders and soldiers accused of war atrocities. He emphasized that this was not a question of persons, but of honor and of the uncompromising assertion of one's rights.

When the acceptance of the Peace Treaty was put to the vote, the German People's Party voted against it. They did so with a full sense of responsibility, for at that moment it was not yet clear whether the "Unacceptable" of Stresemann would not bring about a rejection and therewith

the unknown consequences which had been threatened. But because he was conscious of the responsibility entailed by either decision, Stresemann refused to sit in judgment on those who believed that in the end the nation would be forced to accept the Peace Treaty. The article he wrote in *Deutsche Stimmen* after the division, sounded a note reminiscent of Siegfried's cry: "My father promised me a sword: I was to find it in my dire need. Wälse, Wälse, where is thy sword! We are crying for a sword, but no god can give it back to us. We once possessed it, and it was one of the choicest ever given to a nation. But we broke it wantonly in the shameful days of the Revolution and, as a Nation and an Empire, we are therefore entering on a future beginning in misery and shame." That lament contains the implicit recognition that in future the Reich's foreign policy had to find a new form for its conception of political power. That retrospective lament already indicates a quest for new paths in the future.

Regarding the Constitution Stresemann had declared that the first Constitution, formulated at Weimar, could only be looked on as a temporary measure, which would in any case need revision. The Party had coöperated on the draft in com-

mittee, but none the less they rejected the Constitution, and Stresemann approved of the decision. To him the situation still seemed so obscure, that, as things were, he could not assent to the Republic being made a final and integral part of the Constitution, for the first tests through which the Republic had passed did not seem to him such as to warrant the abandonment of his old dream of a people's empire. He rejected it because he did not care to bind the future with hard and fast conditions. But he rejected it mainly because it involved the hauling down of the old flag. As a young man he had worn the black, red and gold colors of the Burschenschaft and had often defended the ideas it stood for in the Reichstag. But the flag of '48 had been the symbol of the German national ideal, while the black, white and red flag of 1871 was the symbol of action, the flag under which the German Empire had become united and great, and which had waved above the great deeds of the army and navy. To lower one's flag at the moment of defeat meant for Stresemann an inward and spiritual capitulation before the enemy, and this wounded his self-respect as a German. In reply to attacks from the left, who contrasted the concept of law in the new State with the concept of power in the

old, and vehemently criticized what they termed retrospectively the policy of blood and iron, he recalled the fact that it was Kinkel, a Democrat, who had coined the term "policy of blood and iron" and had declared, in his great speech, that only thus could Germany be led towards unity. Koch's assertion that the political development did not lead up to Bismarck, but from 1848 to 1918, was regarded by him as inept and inaccurate: inept, because he refused to believe that the deliberations of the National Assembly would prove as ineffectual as those at St. Paul's Church;[3] and inaccurate, because the decisions of St. Paul's Church culminated in a great affirmation of the hereditary empire, while both hereditary empire and monarchy received their death-blow at Weimar. Stresemann wished to combine the old and the new in the Constitution, and if that combination could not be effected, he had no use for it. Again and again he championed that Empire, although he had often sharply attacked its institutions, against attacks from other quarters. When the assertion was made, in the debate on the minorities questions, that Germany had sinned in her treatment of the Poles and French, he re-

[3] The Paulskirche at Frankfort-on-Main, where the German National Assembly met in 1848-1849.

plied that the fifty years of German rule in Alsace-Lorraine and Posnania were nothing compared with the brutality with which Poles and French had proceeded against the Germans in one week in the newly occupied districts. In point of fact he was hoping for a renewal of Germany through the priorities, for he believed that the ideas of the right of nations to self-determination, once given currency, would prevail and grow to maturity, and that, according to that principle, Austria, the German Tyrol and German Bohemia were bound eventually to join the Reich. But, for the time being, he opposed the assumption by the Reich of unnecessary fetters, such as the explicit acceptance of the rules of international law as a binding element in German law. For, to begin with, Germany would have no part in the shaping of international law by the League of Nations, and she did not know what decisions might be reached without her coöperation. Moreover, the League of Nations, in the form it then had, was not a League of Nations but a League of the former enemy powers. He believed that the comity of nations would be more securely based on international organizations which had proved their ability to work together, and that it would be a mistake for Germany to tie her hands unneces-

sarily in dealing with enemy states which had broken off all relations with Germany.

Stresemann considered the centralized state as such to be desirable, especially in view of the strength which their centralized organization had given the enemy during the war. But popular feeling was against its realization, for the Social Democrats did not dare to set up the centralized state they advocated, now that they had assumed responsibility for the Federal states. He regarded as more serious the menace of a West German Republic, as he feared that such a secession of the Rhineland would become a tool in the hands of France. He also repudiated the right of individual races to secede from Prussia, since Prussia must remain undivided for the sake of the Reich.

Thus everything he did showed his anxiety to preserve the old institutions which had proved their value, until he could convince himself that something new would be better. The preservation of the German Civil Service was an object of his special solicitude; he had often defended it when reproached with having continued its work during the Revolution. He thought it largely due to the sense of duty of the officials that the Reich

had survived the storms of the Revolution. When attempts were made to remove the under-secretaries of State from Parliament, he pointed to England, which could surely serve as political instructor on any question touching parliamentary methods. In England only the chief secretaries were changed, since it was they who determined the main lines of policy, and did not need departmental knowledge. The one permanent element in all the changes was the man who maintained the tradition of the office: i.e., the *Permanent Secretary of State*. Stresemann made a similar demand for the German Civil Service. He was utterly opposed to the system, which was then coming into vogue, of all appointments down to that of rural magistrate being filled in accordance with party adherence. When people accused him of doing this only to protect the officials of his own choice, who otherwise would be removed as members of an opposition party, he declared that the times would undoubtedly come when the coöperation of the German People's Party would be needed, and that the Party would then make its coöperation in the Government depend on the abolition of that kind of system. Later Stresemann, on attaining high office, had sufficient opportunities for proving that he has remained loyal to that promise

made at the time of the wildest party fanaticism, and that he regards the quiet continuance in an office and the fact that the right man is in the right place, as of more importance than the exigencies of party.

CHAPTER VII

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY
(1919-1923)

THE success of the first two Party conventions proved to Stresemann that he had been right in carrying on the National Liberal Party as the German People's Party, and that the Party of which he was the leader was indispensable to the spiritual and material reconstruction of the Reich. In order to strengthen it and to make it truly representative of all classes he endeavored to bring into harmony the various strata of society. The Party stood accused of representing solely the interests of big industry. Stresemann was called, in a depreciatory sense, the leader of the Economic Party. He himself has stated that he was by no means desirous of seeing the People's Party become the one-sided representative of the interests of big industry, but that it might strengthen Germany's foreign policy if it were known when German industry was beginning anew its struggle for a position in the world,

that leaders of German trade, such as Stinnes, Vögler and the industrial federations, endorsed the policy of the People's Party. It was Stresemann's aim to weld the nation together, and the concept "national unity" was to him not a catchword but the main object of his political labors at home. Hence he sought to awaken and to foster within the party the sense that all sections of the nation were *one*. His speeches and articles in that period continually echoed Goethe's words to Eckermann, when he forbade an emotional attitude towards the past and stated that all recollection should be productive. That was why Stresemann refused to take part in the dispute over who was guilty of the collapse, for it seemed to him that the guilt was shared by all alike, the nerve of the Supreme Army Command had broken down but that did not exculpate those who had tried to sabotage the war and had given to the troops who went forward to battle the abusive name "blacklegs."

According to Stresemann Parliament ought to have no more to say in the parliamentary state than in an absolute state. Rather less so. For Parliament chooses its own responsible statesmen and, having done so, must let them carry on their work, without interfering on every trivial point,

because it has given these men its confidence. He maintained that standpoint particularly during the years when the People's Party was not represented in the Government, and restrained his criticisms, knowing that the head of a Government can only be judged when he has had an opportunity of testing his ideas in practice. This tolerance may, perhaps, explain why the party and its leader attained to such influence at that time that the Government papers complained that in the last analysis the People's Party, though not represented in the cabinet, were the dominant power in politics.

That conception of political method and the function of the politician was the outcome of the Liberalism principles enshrined in Stresemann's inmost being. To him human personality and free creative power are at the center of all growth. He saw the historical evolution of social changes in the state, and the political consequences which arose therefrom. But, what distinguished him from the right-wing parties was this: He did not look longingly backwards but sought to control the forces of a new age by a new social and historical conception. Thus he admitted that even Communism was largely inspired by a deep yearning for a better shaping of life, and called upon

the middle class to oppose the ideals of Communism by ideals of their own.

He regarded the education of the popular mind and the winning of the young as his first and most important task. A coalition between the German National Party and the German People's Party was often talked about at that time, for their views on foreign policy were then almost identical. An attempt at fusion was made, the minister Heintze negotiating for the People's Party, and the deputies Düringer, Delbrück and Count Posadowsky for the German National Party. It became evident, however, that the latter were not the interpreters of the feeling of their Party. Delbrück is to-day probably the most violent opponent of German National policy, and Count Posadowsky has since tried, like a voice crying in the wilderness, to convince the German Nationals that they should be grateful to the German People's Party for having joined the Government. In other respects also he has been in violent opposition to the policy of his party. Where the parties differed most fundamentally was on the question of education. The German Nationals were always looking backwards, and when called upon to give an opinion on questions of the present, their answer sounded like the words of

Mephistopheles: "Lord, I find everything very bad." But Stresemann's nature, as a man and a politician, has always been characterized by that saying of Lyncæus, which appears on his *ex libris*:

Zum Sehen geboren,
Zum Schauen bestellt,
Dem Turme geschworen,
Gefällt mir die Welt!

Stresemann was at one with the German Nationals in praising the greatness of the old Empire, but that was not meant as a criticism of the Republic, but as a reminder that the framework of the Reich had been stronger when the "Junker State" Prussia had controlled Germany. The Republic as yet lacked the tradition both of age and of strong men. A paper constitution had replaced the much maligned monarchical institutions which had been a source of inspiration. To develop on that constitution the idea of the State, to make it a living inspiration, to fashion from it the ideal from which great national movements could spring—that was Stresemann's endeavor.

Streseman had made it clear at the first Party Convention that he would never agree to the principle of Government by a middle class bloc.

He had always regarded a coalition of the middle-class parties with the Social Democrats as the ideal. The Party had proved this in practice by advocating, in June, 1920, when a middle-class Government was being formed, that the Social Democrats should be included. They did not wish, however, that a predominant influence should be given to the social Democratic Party, for they were not entitled to it. In his attitude towards Social Democracy after the Revolution Stresemann followed the straight line which started from his reading in youth and had culminated in his great speech to the workers at Werdau. Meanwhile the workers had been forced to recognize that a deep gulf existed between the party doctrines, as represented by their leaders, and actual conditions; but having recognized this, they preferred to admit themselves mistaken in their leaders rather than in their ideas. Stresemann sought to enlist the help of the Social Democrats, a mainly working-class party, for practical work in the State, so that in time they would learn that it is finer to work for the community even at the sacrifice of some ideals than to cling to a rigid set of doctrines and keep aloof from the common national life. The fight for the soul of the working class was the fight for a common national life,

for the education of the people to political understanding. Speaking to his own party, when the German Nationals were making a bid for their support, Stresemann summed this up in the following words: "The great thing is not to set the right-wing parties against the left, but to rally them all to a middle course." When, years before, the intellectual hunger of the socialistic working class threw the young men into the field of politics, they sought in Socialism a religion and an ideal of life. But the middle classes lacked any ardent, combative devotion to the ideas of the old State and that was why the State collapsed. That joy in the ideal of national unity is the inner significance of Stresemann's mission. "Even though we have failed ninety-nine times," he said, "we must try a hundredth time."

Stresemann, who was called the leader of the Economic Party, emphasized in his speeches that a nation living crowded in large cities could only hope to re-attain greatness if it kept its soul intact and preserved its spirit in an age of machines. One must not be embittered but keep faith in the ideal despite all disappointments and never lose faith in humanity. That is what gave him his buoyancy during the fiercest political struggles and his determination to carry men's hearts

with him: "For our homeland is neither hill nor vale, but hearts that beat with ours."

Stresemann has been reproachfully dubbed an optimist. He himself has always pleaded guilty to the charge. In the darkest days he was buoyed up by the belief that there is a moral justice in history. Stresemann's interpretation of history in his historical studies is the Liberal philosophy of the value of personality and the evolution of mankind. His studies of Napoleon, Goethe, Blücher and Gneisenau do not conform to the traditional, popular view. On a basis of original research, he illuminated their personalities, freeing them from prejudiced current conception. Turning his attention to the middle class, which former historians degraded to a crowd that merely followed princes and their counselors, he recalled their genuine achievements and built the future by explaining the past. In his historical disquisitions Stresemann is only partly a narrator of facts, he is above all a creator of new conceptions as to the personality of the great men he deals with and to whom he feels akin. Thus Stresemann disposed of the legend of Goethe's defective national sense, in an address "Goethe and Napoleon," which he delivered in the midst of his anxieties

concerning reparations and the peace. He represents Napoleon as the subduer of England, as the man who straightened out the impotent chaos of the petty German states, as the tamer of the Revolution. If Goethe regarded Napoleon with admiration, the reason lay in his estimate of the man and of the mighty personal influence he exerted, an influence such as scarcely any man of that day possessed. That study was written amidst the turmoil of disputes with France, and no doubt two factors contributed to it: a delight in having intercourse with the great men of the past and the withdrawal from the care of the present into the serenity of historical research. But he always returned to Goethe, and in his "Weimar Diary" he states that the German people may draw faith in its own immortality from the fact that it was able to produce a Goethe.

One paragraph in that essay speaks of the "cheerful Goethe," and one must not overlook the phrase because the same chord of cheerfulness vibrates also in Stresemann. One of the sources of his strength is a sense of humor and a capacity for hearty laughter over people and things. Persons who do not possess that faculty and who take themselves too seriously, will hardly ever grasp the character of the man. One of the

sayings most often quoted by Stresemann is another passage from Lyncæus:

You happy eyes, whatever you have seen,
How fair, how fair it was!

And when, writing in memory of Lingner, he praised his great qualities, he did not forget to mention his capacity for joy and beauty. But he was never, as some thought, a hedonist. Goethe's words "enjoyment coarsens" applied to him also. Assuredly he was in a high degree sensuously joyful, and joyed in the senses. He was not one of those at whom Hartleben shuddered and who never joyfully have raised the brimming cup at the holy midnight hour, and upon whom a maid's dark eye has never flashed in love's enchanting bower.

The sense of the joy of life is part of Stresemann—*humani nihil a me alienum puto.*[1]

When reading through Stresemann's articles and speeches during the first years after the Revolution, the total impression left on one is that that first period was devoted to the gathering of his own forces, of the moral forces of the People's Party. The first occasion since Weimar, when

[1] *Terence,* Heautontimorumenos: "Homo sum, etc." (I am a man and regard nothing human as outside my province.)

Stresemann became the center of public attention in the sphere of home politics, was during the days of the Kapp *Putsch*. When Berlin suddenly found itself, on March 13th, in the hands of General von Lüttwitz and Kapp, any one with clear political vision could see from the very first that such an amateurish rising would lead to new confusion in the Reich, which had been stabilized with so much difficulty. The part Stresemann played in the Kapp *Putsch* illustrates strikingly his bent for compromise. The right-wing parties waited in the hope that things would veer completely in their favor. The Government left Berlin and ordered a General Strike. Stresemann considered that order a crime against the people, for one always knows when a General Strike will begin, but never when and how it will end. The only thing that mattered to Stresemann was that order should be restored, for that was more important than any question of blame or punishment. Accordingly he helped conduct the extraordinarily difficult negotiations between the insurgent military and the Government, represented by the Reich Minister, Schiffer, and so materially contributed to the avoidance of bloodshed and towards making possible the reinstatement of the constitutional Government. His positive action benefited the in-

terests of Germany as much as the waiting policy of the German Nationals and the general strike ordered by the Democrats did the country harm. These two parties brought Germany as near to the brink of Communism as in the worst days of the Revolution. Stresemann sided neither with one party nor with the other, and was particularly opposed to the creation of a Republican civic guard, which might detract from the prestige of the Reichswehr. It was partly due to his exertions that the danger was averted. The Government were secretly grateful to him, and Democratic papers which were wont to oppose him violently, frankly admitted their obligation. But the party leaders with the Minister Schiffer at their head tried publicly to throw him over. Schiffer declared that he knew nothing of any negotiations; on the contrary, he had never had any dealings with the insurgent generals. There was less civic courage to be found among the manful Republicans than among the Court Party before the war.

That, no doubt, was one of the reasons why Stresemann at that time could get up no enthusiasm for the Republic. None the less he was always ready to stand up for it loyally, which proves that he was faithful to his own words: "The highest fulfillment of duty is victory over

one's own inclinations." He furnished another clear proof during the debate on the law for the protection of the Republic. In his speech Stresemann declared himself ready to support anything that might be done for the protection of the State and the institutions sanctioned by the Constitution. But he desired that the law should not be worded: "For the Protection of the Republic," but "For the Protection of the Constitution." The amendments he advocated were almost all directed against regulations for the suppression of public opinion, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of assembly. These proposals were almost as severe as any enforced under the state of siege during the war. Stresemann cared little about republic versus monarchy, but mainly about the safeguarding of the Constitution and the liberty of the people. These principles he defended as vigorously against the encroachments of democracy, as at an earlier period against the encroachments of militarism.

In foreign policy, the first years after the Peace of Versailles show Stresemann concerned above all to stimulate the spiritual energies of his fatherland, to release the country from concentration on internal troubles, so that it could move forward. In the days of the Revolution, he had set

down the moral breakdown as one of the most grievous handicaps of German foreign policy, so his endeavors were now directed to restoring Germany's morale. He himself has said that the intangible feelings in the minds of people abroad, who were watching the new Germany, constituted one of the most important factors for starting and developing new political relationships. He vigorously opposed those who thought they could curry favor with their former enemies by claiming that, during the war, they had never supported the war or worked for a German victory. He knew well that only a people which has faith in itself and is proud of its past, can earn respect and faith from others, and he believed that in England especially people would respect and trust only those who openly admitted that they had done their level best during the war to bring England to her knees. Stresemann believed that only men who felt in a strongly national way would find understanding abroad.

When considering Stresemann's attitude to the implications of the Versailles Treaty and Reparations, which he generally called the "war indemnity," one must bear in mind that he was among those who had rejected the peace terms, but were now obliged to make the best they could

of a political condition which they had been at pains to prevent. Stresemann firmly believed that the allies were mistaken in hoping that the Treaty of Versailles marked the end of an epoch. He held, on the contrary, that the end of the war marked the beginning of great and unprecedented changes. Versailles itself, with all its implications, was for him merely an episode.

He was led to that conclusion by his knowledge of the elementary needs of international economics. For the trade of victors and vanquished alike was bound to suffer severely, if the two great economic organisms, Germany and Russia, were excluded.

Stresemann knew that having been beaten, Germany was compelled to pay a war indemnity, and he accepted that fact as an inescapable necessity. There remained the question of the precise figure. Germany made offers, at the first Spa conference, regarding her ability to pay. Stresemann thought this a mistake for if the Versailles treaty imposed on Germany a general obligation to pay, the right policy was not to pledge oneself to definite figures (which moreover far exceeded Germany's capacity) but, as far as possible, to let those figures be dictated to one. Germany would then be able to resist the dictation once economic disillusion-

ment had progressed so far that the Allies were willing to come to an understanding. Stresemann favored that course at the time, even at the risk of an invasion of the Ruhr by French troops, which in view of the then chauvinism of French policy seemed in any case scarcely avoidable. The Reparations issue had become a mere lever for political demands, especially in regard to the Rhine frontier, which France had failed to obtain at Versailles. It was a matter of course to every German that the curse of the stolen Rhine gold would vitiate France's Rhineland aspirations. "Let him who has it, be seared by care, and let him who lacks it, be gnawed by envy." But only few saw, at the time, that that curse must first bring about a twilight of the gods.

Stresemann rejected the policy of the Imperial Chancellor Wirth, who hoped for moral conquests and believed that by trying hard to fulfill the obligations, the impossibility of fulfilling them would be proved. He believed in neither of Wirth's arguments. He gave expression to his attitude, when the London Ultimatum was voted upon for the first time, under the Wirth cabinet. Several deputies of his own party felt obliged to advocate the acceptance of the London Ultimatum, in the hope of saving Upper Silesia. Strese-

mann himself was only prepared to accept it on condition that definite and binding guarantees were given with regard to the so-called Sanction-towns and Upper Silesia. As party leader he assumed the initiative in foreign political negotiations, and on behalf of his group addressed on May 9th, 1921, to Lord Kilmarnock, the representative of the English Ambassador, Lord d'Abernon, who was then on leave, the four following questions, stating that an affirmative reply might decide the attitude of himself and his party:

1. Supposing we accept the Ultimatum, will the supplement to Article 19, which gives arbitary powers to demand from us raw materials and manufactured goods, be mitigated and rectified?

2. Is the 50 per cent duty on exports to stand?

3. Will the occupation of Düsseldorf, Duisburg and the Rhine customs frontier be discontinued?

4. Will the industrial region of Upper Silesia remain in German hands?

Up till the last moment no answer had arrived, and it was not until twenty-four hours later that Stresemann received the English official reply, which, characteristically, was affirmative except for some minor reservations on the fourth point. That incident goes to prove how much Germany

suffered at that time by a lack of self-confidence, and how much more accurate was Stresemann's estimate of England than Wirth's. The German People's Party drew their own conclusions from the incident, and left the Government, in which they had been represented since the first Reichstag elections.

Stresemann's subsequent policy as Chancellor and Foreign Minister was the logical outcome of his attitude to the London Ultimatum. Then he said in effect: "Give Upper Silesia back to Germany and we will acept the London Ultimatum." As Foreign Minister he declared: "Evacuate the Ruhr, and we are ready to accept the Dawes Plan."

Wirth and Rathenau pursued the opposite course: first they agreed to sign, and were content with unsubstantiated promises from the other side.

Later on, when Stresemann's negotiations, as Chancellor and Foreign Minister, had been successful, and his policy had resulted in the liberation of the Sanction-towns of the Ruhr and of the Cologne Belt, the adherents of Wirth and Rathenau claimed that he had merely continued and completed the policy of the former. This must be emphatically denied. There are funda-

mental differences between the two policies. Wirth and Rathenau imagined that by yielding and proving their honest intention to fulfill the obligations laid on Germany, they would make moral conquests, or at least would so change the point of view of the other side that the allied powers would agree, as the atmosphere grew friendlier, to modifications in their demands. Rathenau once said: "Let us see how far we can go. When one is faced with something difficult, one must say: 'I will do it, under any circumstances.'" Stresemann did not wish to bind Germany "under any circumstances" to the demands of the enemy Powers, but only if the demands were modified, until they became possible of fulfillment. He wanted at the same time to see the liberation of German industry in the Ruhr and Rhineland and the evacuation of occupied territory which would provide for Germany's freedom, and begin the modification of oppressive measures.

The policy advocated by Wirth ended in the opposite result, namely, the occupation of the Ruhr. The German people revolted with a unanimity unknown since 1914 against this illegal action of the French. Stresemann spoke in the Reichstag on behalf of the Center Party, the German Nationals, the German People's Party,

the Democrats, the Bavarian People's Party, the Bavarian Peasants' League and the German Hanoverians. His words were a flaming protest against France, an enthusiastic defense of national unity: "The more grievously affliction weighs upon us all, the more firmly we must and shall hold together. Differences of political doctrine and religious sentiment must yield to a sense of pride—a pride justified in spite of everything—in being and loyally remaining Germans." It seemed to him that the hour had come when the opponents of the Constitution must learn from the people on the Rhine and in the Ruhr, that if they had Germany's future at heart they must cease from quarrelling with the Constitution, and faithfully serve the State. When the Ruhr struggle had passed its climax, Stresemann summed up his profession of faith in Germany's future, as follows: "There are many who regard the present time as hopeless, who revile our country and think we have no longer any justification for our existence and are in danger of decay; but I console myself with this reflection: If this realm, which can give the individual neither splendor nor greatness but only grief and misery and humiliation—if it can nevertheless cause hundreds of thousands to leave hearth and home, as a token of their loy-

alty, then we need not despair of the future of our fatherland."

In the same speech he formulated the aims of passive resistance: "The population is waging this fight for quite definite aims. It is waging it for the undiminished preservation of German soil; it is waging it for renewed political and economic control over the German Ruhr; it is waging it for the restoration of conditions, in the Rhineland and Palatinate, established by international treaties; it is waging it to solve the Reparations question, in such a way that, while imposing on us the greatest sacrifices and the hardest labor, our continued economic, financial and social existence will be ensured and the possibility, indispensable to any nation, of further development in the future. If these conditions are created for us in Europe, then we can regard the resistance in the Ruhr as a closed chapter, nothing more than the mute protest of a tortured and oppressed people."

An attempt was made about that time to represent Stresemann's policy as opposed to that of Cuno. The assertion was made that Cuno was aiming at a complete victory in the Ruhr struggle and at resistance to the uttermost, whereas Stresemann, during the struggle, was constantly seeking for an understanding. Stresemann looked upon

Cuno's activity as the Government's most signal achievement, but he regarded it from this point of view, that an active policy meant being prepared for any turn in the international situation, so as to be able to intervene actively in Germany's favor. Let a distinction be drawn by all means between talking and acting, but in the situation in which Germany then found herself, action might consist in nothing more than parliamentary and diplomatic activity. Action meant to clear a path for international agreement upon Reparations, and thereby to clear the way for the liberation of the Ruhr and the Rhineland. The weakness of Cuno's policy was a tendency to be so engrossed in the conduct of the Ruhr struggle, that it lost sight of the real aim in view, viz., a change of conditions in Germany's favor. The Ruhr struggle ought not to become an aim in itself, but must be regarded as an instrument for the attainment of a general understanding. With that definite reservation, Stresemann identified himself with Cuno's policy and expressly denied all rumors to the effect that his party was opposed to the Imperial Chancellor.

The rumors, however, concerning this opposition did not grow less, but became a subject of almost general discussion, and after the publica-

tion of an article in *Germania,* demanding that Stresemann should succeed Cuno, Stresemann himself discountenanced any such idea, pointing to the danger of changing horses while crossing the stream. One of his Nationalist opponents asserted later on that Stresemann had striven for ministerial office out of pure ambition. But if this were so, he had chosen the most unfortunate moment for accepting ministerial position. Germany had reached the darkest hour she had ever been called to experience since her beginnings. The tasks which confronted an Imperial Chancellor at that moment must have seemed well-nigh impossible even to one endowed with a giant's strength, and the prospect of steering the badly damaged ship of state to harbor justified the gloomiest anticipations. An ambitious man, in the ordinary sense, would certainly not have accepted the post of Imperial Chancellor at that moment, when everything was to be lost, and little honor to be gained. But if ambition in a statesman means to brace the courage and faith of himself and of his people, to trust in the most difficult situation, in the future and in a renewed ascent; if ambition means the sacrifice of all one's being for the common weal, then Count Reventlov may have been right.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR

WHEN the Stresemann Cabinet was being formed, the general opinion was that it would represent the last parliamentary government. No one knew, however, what was to come after. Plans were made in Bavaria and Saxony, some assumed more or less concrete shape, others were lost sight of amid the general perplexity of the time. There was unanimity only on one point: if the cabinet did not bring about a turn for the better, then Germany was lost, then deliverance could only come by a miracle.

The material distress of the inflation period, which cruelly tried the German population, already enfeebled by the mental and physical hardships of the war, the general helplessness in face of rapid disappearance of hard-earned savings, the fruitless attempt to keep pace with the depreciation of the currency—all this had undermined the spiritual health of the people. If Germany was to be restored politically and materially, it

was necessary first for the people to recover their sanity. To diagnose the cause of the sickness and to strive for its removal, were but a part of the great work which Stresemann took upon himself. The more important and almost the more difficult part lay in resuscitating the sound energies which still existed in the nation. First of all Stresemann had to foster the belief in a national resurgence. He had to show that neither a miracle, nor possible disunion among the Allies, nor a nebulous dictatorship could bring deliverance. Salvation could only come by the faith in Germany's strength and purpose. That psycho-political healing process was all the more difficult because so many were suffering from political hysteria. They saw in each new misfortune a further confirmation of their own pessimism and, as is the way with people whom misfortune has brought to despair, regarded each new blow of fate with a certain grim satisfaction. There were plenty of persons in Germany at that time who felt a kind of fear lest they and the nation should recover and there were others who, for reasons of party tactics, did not wish to see a recovery.

Count Westarp once said of Stresemann that he was a fanatic for unity. That is correct to this extent that it has always been Stresemann's

final and supreme aim to bind all the forces of the nation together for common aims, to interest all sections in the state and its welfare. This was true even at the time of his first political activity in Saxony, when he was striving to win the support of the working class. It became of decisive moment during Germany's most critical period, when he formed the first Stresemann Cabinet from the so-called Great Coalition, that is from parties ranging from the Social Democrats to the People's Party. Such a tremendous enterprise as that undertaken by Stresemann as Chancellor to save the Reich when it was bleeding from a thousand wounds, could only be carried through if he knew that the widest parliamentary support was solidly behind him and his cabinet. The man who above all others shared that consciousness with Stresemann was the then Secretary for Trade, who, though himself a member of the People's Party would only accept office on condition that the Social Democrat Hilferding were given the Ministry of Finance. A preparatory discussion between the two men led to complete agreement, which showed how strong, under Stresemann's guidance, was the will to national unity among the leading men of the parties represented in the Cabinet.

The situation which Stresemann found was most disheartening. The Ruhr struggle had inwardly collapsed. According to Lassalle, passive resistance, when all means of active resistance have failed, is the highest degree of heroism, and the heroism displayed by the Rhine and Ruhr population will always be reckoned among the brightest deeds in German history. But in August, 1923, a leader conscious of his responsibility was no longer justified in overlooking the symptoms of collapse which were growing ever more apparent. The resistance in the Ruhr, powerful as it had been, when the people's will blazed up against the foreign intruders, soon produced certain demoralizing consequences. So long as French troops stood on German soil all work was prohibited, the factories lay idle, preventing the French from making the Ruhr adventure a profitable one to themselves. On the other hand, the man who did not work but subsisted on the state grant was a hero, whereas the worker who wished to attend to his duty was a traitor. The confusion of ideas caused by a preposterous situation, led, necessarily, to false conceptions of duty and morality. The strange results produced by state relief to the unemployed in the Ruhr are perhaps most clearly illustrated by a matrimonial

advertisement in a newspaper, in which a Ruhr worker mentions among his qualifications, that he is "in receipt of Ruhr relief." The rights of German sovereignty had been overridden; the railways were running under French management, the works were occupied by the military, the leaders of industry, among them Krupp and Thyssen, were serving prison sentences. The customs frontier passed through the Ruhr, so that in actual fact the Reich was deprived of its most valuable source of revenue and of a district both materially and spiritually very precious.

No one, indeed, could have believed, when the struggle began, that the passive resistance would or could last for nine months. But with the progressive weakening of the inward power of resistance, the task of exploiting it by diplomatic means became all the more urgent. Passive resistance was not an end in itself, but its object was to force France to realize that an agreement could only be reached through negotiation. Cuno, Stresemann's predecessor, under whose Chancellorship the resistance had begun, had never put forward the demand that the troops should be withdrawn before negotiations could begin. He had conceived of passive resistance as a means of drawing the attention of the world on the districts

oppressed by France, and so making clear that the French assertions that the Rhine and Ruhr populations wished to be incorporated with France, were completely untrue. For the men the French were recruiting under the title of Rhenish Separatists, and whose leaders, almost to a man, had been at some time in a prison, a lunatic asylum or a penal settlement, was taken seriously by no one. The only danger they offered was that of the French bayonets that supported them. Far more dangerous was the so-called "cold Separatism." A number of men of rank and position in the Rhineland disguised their plans for a separate Rhenish State under the excuse that they did not wish to detach themselves permanently from the Reich, but felt obliged to set up a Rhenish state as a temporary measure, in order subsequently to start a curative process from without. The development initiated by Stresemann confounded the plans of these persons, but for the time being they constituted a grave danger.

In close connection with these events in the Ruhr we must quote the following words of Cuno: "I should designate any minister who did not stake everything on the stabilization of our currency, as a criminal against the development of the German nation." These words, at the time

they were uttered, met with lively assent from the right wing in the Reichstag. But the truth was that the Ruhr struggle was devouring the last reserves of German currency, and that the gold in the Reichsbank had shrunk to a minimum in consequence of the Ruhr relief. The unproductive expenditure on the Ruhr struggle exacted enormous sums of German money. This money could not be raised by normal methods, and while the vast financial wastage in the Ruhr was constantly depreciating the German currency, means could only be raised by issuing more and more un-covered notes and so still depreciating the currency further. In August, 1923, a tramway ticket cost 100,000 marks, in January, 1924, 150 milliards. Without abandoning the Ruhr struggle and, without solving the external political problems, the financial question could not be put in order. The decline in trade could not be arrested until the currency was placed upon a sound footing, and the flight of German capital abroad could only be stopped by the restoration of confidence in Germany's economic future. The strengthening of the currency, however, as Stresemann had always insisted, was a requisite condition of a sound morale in the nation—in other words of a political recovery. For a people which wears itself out

daily in a struggle for the barest subsistence, cannot have the energy left for great national and political movements. So from that point of view also, a cessation of the Ruhr struggle was imperative, for the currency could not be stabilized as long as the trouble in the Ruhr continued.

The German Nationals had agreed to the necessity of stabilizing the currency, but as usual they would not take the only path that led to it.

The Bavarians of the Rhineland were resisting with the greatest enthusiasm. In Bavaria the exponents of the most radical ideas were united in opposition to Stresemann. All were agreed on the phrase: "Stresemann—crazyman," one of the favorite slogans of the Nationalists, which subsequently misled a poor madman into making an attempt on Stresemann's life. But at the same time, it was clear to them that Stresemann must be one of that dictatorial directory which was being freely discussed in Bavarian beer-houses. For even the most fantastic Bavarian Nationalists admitted that Stresemann was a personality in foreign affairs, and must be retained, if any kind of settlement with the French was to be reached. In the "Stahlhelm's" scheme for the establishment of a national dictatorship, we read under paragraph 2: "I form a Directory. I appoint Herr

Rabbethge to be Director of Trade, Count Kanitz to be Food Director, Dr. Stresemann to be Foreign Director. They carry on their activities in an honorary capacity. The tasks of the Reich ministers are assumed by the Secretaries of State."

At a meeting of the prime ministers of the separate states the Bavarian Premier Von Knilling, assented to the abandonment of the Ruhr struggle. None the less the movement of the patriotic associations broke out in Munich. The Bavarian Government sought to ensure their position by conferring full dictatorial powers on the State Commissary-general von Kahr. The true significance of this move was at once gaged by Stresemann, who replied to it by decreeing a state of siege for Germany, not, be it noted, without the full approval of the Prussian Government and of the Prussian Minister for the Interior. The weakness of the Reich Government is shown by the case of General von Lossow. Probably encouraged by the attitude of the Bavarian State Commissary-general, who no longer reckoned with the Reich Government at all—he refused obedience to the Reich Government and took the oath to Bavaria. The Bavarian movement was all the more dangerous because as the *Pom-*

mersche Tagespost wrote, "Pomerania" stood "firm as iron behind Kahr." The Pomeranians approved the fact that the Bavarian Free State took into its service General von Lossow, who had been dismissed by the Reich Government, and the Bavarian division, "as trustees to the German people." At midnight on November 8th the Cabinet was assembled in the Reich Chancellor Stresemann's study. Stresemann invested General von Seeckt with executive power, as civil war seemed imminent. Yet during that very night Stresemann established contact with the burgomasters of various North Bavarian towns. The German National newspapers had organized that night a special news service, as they reckoned upon the outbreak of the counter-revolution, and the leader of an association of big landowners was informed on November 7th, when he wanted to conduct important financial negotiations in Berlin, that it was useless for him to deal with the present government, since on November 10th the Reich would be faced with a new government.

All were agreed on the watchword "With black, white and red over the Rhine" which Hitler had coined, and which was well calculated to carry away the thoughtless and foolish. There was general agreement, too, regarding the march on

Berlin, for the destruction of the city and the overthrow of the "Jew Government" (which did not contain a single Jew). The danger that Bavaria would detach herself from the Reich was great. The patriotic associations were mustered around Bamberg and Koburg with artillery, infantry and cavalry, and were seriously threatening Bavaria's unity with the Reich.

For Stresemann, as the Reich Chancellor in power, the question was not so much a material one, nor one of constitutional law; it was a question of political tact and psychological insight. Everything depended on what happened during the next few hours. He decided that the hotheads of the Nationalist movement would probably end by devouring each other, and that government intervention was more likely to weld together their conflicting political views than to separate them.

The Social Democrats have since blamed Stresemann for adopting a conciliatory attitude and not intervening in Bavaria with the Reichswehr. To begin with, the psychological fact had to be considered that in dealing with Bavaria violence would beget violence. If Bavaria were forced to remain in the Reich against her will, greater dangers would be provoked later on. The best

way was to appear to yield, trusting that cool reflection and good sense would lead Bavaria to remain within the Reich. In at least one respect Bavaria offered no ground for anxiety: the property and food supplies of her population were insured, despite the Putsch.

In Saxony the position was different. There the Communists were predominant in the Government. Communist military associations were formed in opposition to the Reichswehr and the security police, and despite a government prohibition, these associations dominated the country and did as they pleased, interfering with industrial and agricultural undertakings and developing more and more towards the Russian model. In Brunswick and Thuringia similar tendencies asserted themselves, and the plan was openly discussed of forming Saxony, Brunswick and Thuringia into a communist state. This would have added weight to the Bavarian movement for separation, for a communist belt between Saxony and Berlin would have separated Southern from Northern Germany.

Lack of food, in addition to these systematic political movements, contributed to the prevalence of riots in the country. In Hanover, Lübeck, Gelsenkirchen, Rotthausen, Datteln, the workers

were in revolt against the misery of their conditions, and pillaging of country estates, illegal requisitioning and sabotage in factories grew more and more frequent. Zinovieff subsequently declared that a blow was to be struck at the Reich from Central Germany, and that this had only been prevented by the speedy suppression of the risings.

In 1923 Germany was nearer Communism than at any time during the years 1918, 1919 and 1920. In 1923 France was more powerful and dangerous than at the time of the Versailles Peace.

That was the situation which confronted Stresemann.

All parties were agreed on the program the situation demanded: withdrawal of the French from the Ruhr, stabilization of the currency, pacification of the Reich. That was Stresemann's program. Like all works of genius, it was simple. The program was the clearest and simplest imaginable, but at each step a blaze of indignation arose in the country.

When one looks back on the happenings of the years 1923, they unfold themselves without difficulty, and from the clearness with which they can be traced to-day, one can hardly deduce the utter confusion of that time. The Reich Chan-

cellor could not touch any individual problem without touching all the rest as well.

In Saxony Stresemann enforced his will by the most brutal measures. He ordered the Reichswehr to march in, appointed a commissioner and, in response to the various appeals for help, ordered the Zeigner Ministry to be removed by military force, as they were siding with the Communists and resisting the Reich Government's summons to resign. The ministers were put out of action, and the Diet was occupied, with a view to restoring order. The Social Democrats like the German Nationals desired the goal but not the path that led to it. They opposed Ebert since he approved and supported Stresemann's policy in every way. The Social Democrats had expressed their agreement with the march into Saxony and wanted to depose the Communist Government, but when it proved impossible to do this without force, the Social Democrats were afraid of losing their influence over the masses of electors, and in fear of the next election refused to follow Stresemann and withdrew from the government. In doing this they did not see what could not at the time be openly announced, viz., that the march into Saxony was necessary, in or-

Stresemann when Imperial Chancellor in Conversation with E. D. Morrell

der to be in close proximity to the Bavarian frontier and, if the worst came to the worst, to overcome the danger of Bavarian separation with the Reichswehr.

The stabilization of the currency was a two-fold task, a technical and a psychological one. Helfferich, whom people to-day are fond of acclaiming as the father of the *rentenmark,* in reality merely proposed the "rye-mark," a monetary unit to be based on the fluctuating value of a hundredweight of rye. It was Schacht who originated the proposal of the *rentenmark,* based on the holdings of gold and stable currencies in the Reichsbank. Schacht has published his reminiscences on this subject, entitled *The Stabilization of the Mark.* In this book he describes and praises his own performance, but represents it as having been carried out *in vacuo.* No one will wish to underrate the work done by the Reichsbank and its head, but its success was surely due, in the last analysis, to the confidence of the people in an economic and political recovery. On that confidence rested the basis of the currency, the security furnished by agriculture and industry to the dollar treasury-bills and to the future *rentenmark.* The values on which these were based, were not real; they were almost as ficti-

tious as those which the Finance Minister in "Faust" recommends to the Emperor, values which were based on property in land and which were scarcely realizable in fact. The ultimate value on which currency bills rested was faith in the strength of the state, whose authority backed the value of the notes. And the restoration of that authority to the state was the work of Stresemann.

A successful termination of the Ruhr struggle and an agreement with France were the only things which could ensure the future of the state. It was the repulse to French hopes, accomplished by peaceful methods, which restored to the nation its confidence in the Reich and in the capacity of its responsible rulers.

Closely though the various problems were intertwined, the Franco-German question overshadowed them all. The problem of whether it would be possible to bring about a lasting understanding between Germany and France, was the focus of thought and anxiety in 1923.

At the time, the question was erroneously represented as a choice between Anglo-German and Franco-German understanding. This was a misconception. A certain abstract support was to be expected from England; for instance the Eng-

lish Ambassador Lord d'Abernon was striving to bring about an understanding between England and Germany, and the English Crown jurists decided that the Ruhr invasion by the French was contrary to law. But no practical help, such as Stresemann was undoubtedly hoping for, was obtainable from England. When Berlin made efforts in that direction, England replied that Cuno had missed the psychological moment for the ending of the Ruhr struggle, and that England was not disposed to intervene on behalf of the loser in a hopeless struggle. Nothing but Germany's own strength could avail, and there was no other course open but to seek an understanding with France and to convince her that it was in her own interests to come to terms. There was no lack of openings. Two years previously, Stresemann had had conversations with French journalists and leaders of industry. Stresemann originated a new technique in German politics, inasmuch as he was the first German statesman since the foundation of the Reich to use luncheon speeches as a means for political propaganda and discussion. Moreover, he established during his Reich Chancellorship a press organ of his own, *Die Zeit,* which rendered him valuable services, though its existence was precarious from the

first, owing to the inflation and defective organization.

It scarcely need be said that Stresemann, in accordance with his development, would have preferred originally to follow a different course and enforce Germany's rights by other means. But the idea of the Ruhr struggle had been superseded by that of political power, and it was now Germany's task to oppose to the idea of political power that of peace and understanding, in the interests of all the nation concerned. Those who set out from the principle of national power as the decisive factor in politics, were least able to follow the train of Stresemann's reasoning. The German Nationals withdrew. Certain members of his own party, such as Kemnitz, Quaatz and Geisler changed over to the German National Party, because they had no sympathy with Stresemann's changed conception and political power. It was among his own party that he encountered the most serious opposition. Some of his followers joined the German National Party; others founded a new party called the "National Liberal Union," whose end, however, was as inglorious as its beginnings.

In general, it can be said, that while the political situation remained desperate, Stresemann's

position was a solitary one. The Social Democrats had parted company with him because he had beaten down the Communist risings in Saxony; the German Nationals fought him as a traitor to the country, because he had abandoned the Ruhr struggle and because of his attitude to Bavaria. And even in his own party Stresemann stood alone and forsaken by his oldest and best political friends. The history of those days, when his future was shrouded in the deepest gloom, his present a lonely and solitary one, is enough, no matter what course events may yet take, to establish Stresemann's greatness as a man and as a statesman.

The measures taken in Bavaria and Saxony and in the currency question, the attempts to combat a partial agricultural strike and various workmen's risings, depended for their success upon the way in which the Ruhr struggle could be ended. The great problem was whether it would be possible to progress from the Ruhr struggle to an understanding with France. Apart from Germany's inability to resist any longer, the struggle had to be abandoned because its continuance would have nipped in the bud any attempt at discussion with France.

Under Poincaré France was resisting any kind

of settlement with might and main. The preposterous Reparations clauses she had inserted in the Versailles Treaty, enabled her at any time to justify and enforce any political demands she cared to make. Hence there was urgent need to deprive Poincaré of the argument that Germany was unwilling, in malicious defiance of the Treaty, to pay reparations and the indemnity for war losses. It was necessary to convince the public in France and elsewhere that France's true interests lay in other directions. No doubt that is why Stresemann chose the industrial and trade convention, which was watched by the leaders of international commerce, to deliver his first great programmatic speech in the relation of France's financial demands to Germany's political aims. He spoke as follows, on August 25th, 1923:

"The importance of German trade is strongly emphasized in the French Yellow Book. The statement is made that though the German Reich be poor, German wealth is unimpaired. I imagine you all recognize that this implies too high an estimate of German economic strength. Nothing illustrates this better than the fact that recently—if I am not mistaken, at a general meeting of the Deutsche Bank—one of the shareholders pointed out that the dividend paid by

Germany's largest bank does not equal the cost of a tramway ticket in Berlin. But, well and good, if German trade holds possibilities for the future and the promise of future development—and I grant that it does hold them, provided we are allowed to achieve peace without and consolidation within—then the Allies need only accept the principles of the memorandum presented by the German government in order to find a way, in agreement with us, for making our last source of strength the basis and guarantee of Germany's payment of Reparations. Under my predecessor's Government we prepared schemes which, in pursuance of the memorandum of June 7th, laid down in legal form this offer of pledges. We did this in the conviction that the memorandum is not merely a declaration, but that it ought to lead to the understanding for which we had already made the necessary preparations and upon which we are ready to set the seal of legislation. The present Government maintains the offer of the previous Government. It does not regard it as too great a sacrifice for the liberation of German soil, for the preservation of our sovereignty, for the consolidation of our position, if we offer a part of German production as a pledge for the discharge of our obligations in the matter of Repara-

tions. I regard this sacrifice as no less significant than the attempts at reform, whereby no less a person than Freiherr von Stein infused new ideas into the broken-down Prussia of his day. The reforms he aimed at were rooted rather in the originally sound ideas of the French Revolution, than in feudal Junkerdom, as the French Prime Minister alleges. He did not combat Napoleon as a son of the French Revolution. Napoleon was not merely a son of the French Revolution, he was also the master and heir of the Revolution, and Stein rebelled against him because, rising from the Revolution, Napoleon had succumbed to Imperialism, and was later destroyed by it. Imperialism always finds its obstacle in imponderable spiritual movements, and these are a factor in politics and in the life of nations, which no statesman can afford to ignore.

"If France is sincere in desiring positive pledges for the German deliveries after the expiry of a moratorium, she can certainly find the way to an understanding with us. But that way is not through differentiating between the Rhineland and the Ruhr on one hand and the German Reich on the other. We cannot regard as a basis for solving the Reparations question the mortgaging, though only temporary, of the Ruhr, the transfer

of the Rhineland railways and of individual mines and estates on the Rhine and in the Ruhr, to Allied companies, even though the Rhinelanders be allowed to participate in their administration, as suggested in documents 23 and 25 of the French Yellow Book. That attempt at solution, adjusted specifically to the Rhineland and the Ruhr, raises all the political problems which the occupation of the Ruhr and the Rhineland involve for the question of international relations. On the other hand, I desire to state—and to state it as clearly as I expressed, on behalf of the Reich Government, my adherence to the policy of Positive Pledges—that we believe there is no international solution to the Rhineland question. For us the Rhineland question is an internal question for the German Reich. The Constitution of the German Reich gives to each German stem the right to decide according to their own will and desire the form in which they will adhere to the German Reich. Up to the present the only declarations we have had from the German parties in the Rhineland have stated that they do not wish in any way whatever to modify their allegiance to the Reich and to Prussia, for that allegiance corresponds historically to their essential needs.

"I have repeatedly expressed the view—as

Deputy and as Reich Chancellor, and have sometimes been attacked for it—that the question of the burdens we will take upon ourselves, is one for negotiation and compromise. It is also a question on which I will in no way commit myself to definite limits, the more so as no one can estimate those limits with any certainty. In that question we can and shall make far-reaching concessions, if thereby we can insure our liberty. But with the same firmness we must also insist that the Rhineland question is not one for compromise; the Rhineland question touches the life and soul of the German people. There can be but one solution for every German; the free German Rhine as part of Germany. Let the world hear it, and let the world understand it as every German understands it."

Though direct negotiations between the heads of the two States were as yet impossible, and diplomatic negotiations hardly practicable, the essential pioneer work was being done by the press. It became apparent how indispensable it is for an active statesman to have a paper absolutely devoted to his ideas, for the *rapprochement* between France and Germany was pursued in the first instance by Stresemann's *Zeit* and Poincaré's *Temps*. Nor was it very long before

the *Zeit* was able to advance the following proposition: "If the *Temps* realizes that Germany's economic recovery is impossible so long as her most important industrial region is paralyzed by the occupation, then the *Temps* should not be far from realizing that the payment of Reparations which the Reich Chancellor has expressly promised in the event of Germany's being able to make them, is equally impossible so long as control over the most important sources of her national wealth is withheld. The Ruhr struggle is injurious not only to Germany, but equally to France and the other powers; and the longer that struggle drags on, the less will France benefit from it. The defensive attitude maintained by Germany in the Ruhr, is due to the recognition that she cannot survive unless control over the Ruhr is restored to her. She can only survive by regaining her mastery over commerce and transport on the Ruhr and the Rhine, and by bringing conditions in the Rhineland into conformity with the Treaty. To that demand must be added a further one: the release of prisoners and the return of those who have been expelled."

France did not refuse to face the position in theory. Not even Poincaré could do that, but he clearly recognized Germany's impotence, and

knew that to yield at that moment meant a reversal of his whole policy. It is true that in reply to Stresemann's proposals he made half-promises to the German Government. He promised the evacuation of the Ruhr after the discontinuance of the passive resistance, but when the Government ordered passive resistance to cease, he devised new sophistries in order to persist in the illegal occupation. His aim was to cheat Stresemann's Government of the success his policy had inaugurated, to undermine its authority, to which the nation looked as the last means of straightening out the tangle, and thereby to bring about a state of chaos which would give France the whip hand.

It was Stresemann's task, on the contrary, to make Poincaré show his hand and thus to beat him at his own game. Having declared, as he was bound to do, that the Government was no longer in a position indefinitely to continue the relief payments in the Ruhr, he called the whole world to witness that Poincaré would be responsible if, in consequence of the chaos created in the Ruhr by the French troops, hunger revolts and excesses were to break out. The immediate effect of this was that the French commanders reported to Paris that they did not know what would hap-

pen if famine broke out. But, more important still, the other countries were forced to intervene.

The idea underlying the new Reparations policy inaugurated by Stresemann was to replace the special pledges on the Rhine and Ruhr by guarantee of the whole Reich. Guarantees furnished by German commerce and the assets of the Reich were to be the security for the French demands, instead of the special pledges arbitrarily seized by the French. And, conversely, if the Reich as a whole were to stand surety, it was of the first importance that German trade and industry should be set free in Germany's most important industrial region, so that the guarantee would be made by the Reich as a whole. Not until then would the stabilization of the currency, prepared by the issue of dollar treasury bills and *rentenmark,* be finally assured. The very future of the Reich depended on whether that point of view would prevail.

So soon as Poincaré felt that he had been beaten on one point, he took refuge on another. If Stresemann spoke of Reparations, Poincaré spoke of safeguards. Even under the Cuno Government, the German Foreign Minister von Rosenberg had stated that by a conciliatory attitude

France could realize the dream of many good Europeans, who were hoping for the recovery of Europe through the economic coöperation of Germany and France. And in the note of June 7th, 1923, when Cuno demanded an impartial international court to decide Germany's capacity to pay and the manner and amount of the payments, the Chancellor Cuno offered a "truce of God" between France and Germany. It is true, he stopped half-way by putting a time-limit to his offer; and this gave France the pretext for asserting that Germany wanted only a respite before throwing herself on France to obtain revenge. The twelve weeks of Stresemann's Chancellorship, however, had sufficed to convince the world, including France, that the German desire for an understanding was sincere, and that Europe would advance to a new era of economic and political peace and reconstruction by the methods of Stresemann, and not by those of Poincaré. The great turning-point in policy was the 30th of November, 1923, when an international body of experts, summoned by the Reparations Commission, met to sift the question of Reparations and Germany's capacity to pay. On that day the Reparations policy as a weapon was virtually wrested from the hands of France, and it became

an instrument in the service of international trade and of all countries interested in the restoration of political quiet and in the material recovery of Europe.

The first phase of the negotiations was characterized by the fact that the men involved on each side had no personal knowledge of those on the other. But as conversations between man and man created an atmosphere of mutual trust, personal relationships were knit up. The personal contact between Stresemann, Dawes, Owen, Houghton and d'Abernon introduced a modern, practical touch into the political negotiations. Particularly noteworthy were the English Ambassador d'Abernon and the excellent American Ambassador Houghton. A French newspaper, at that time, contrasted the French Ambassador Laurent, who was living like a hermit, with d'Abernon who had gathered about him German men of science, artists, economists, politicians and pressmen, and the article pointed out how much deeper must be the English Ambassador's comprehension of Germany than that of his French colleague. D'Abernon had already made Stresemann's acquaintance before the latter became Chancellor, and the friendly relations subsisting between the two men has often, both at that time

and later, had a pacifying effect in moments of political tension.

Stresemann's Chancellorship lasted altogether a hundred days, from August 13th to November 23rd, 1923. With the opposition of nearly the entire people, Stresemann had set trade and politics going again. The negotiations with France had been set on the right track, a start had been made with the stabilization of the currency, the revolts in the Reich had been put down. Other events, which would have excited the nation in calmer times, passed almost unnoticed amid the great struggles of the day. Stresemann had found the courage to decrease the number of officials, a step often demanded, to lessen the expense of German administration. Under the Stresemann Government, in which the Social Democrats were still represented, the Crown Prince had been granted permission to return to Germany.

Some of these measures had only been practicable through a special law passed at the request of the Stresemann Cabinet, which conferred on the Chancellor almost the powers of a dictator. The call for a Dictator had gone up often enough from the Right. Now that a Dictator was actually operating, he was forced into sharp conflict with the Right, not only the Bavarian

Nationalists, but also the German Nationals. For instance, "thousands of German men and women at Schöneberg" passed this resolution: "make a clean sweep! Away with the Stresemann Government! Hail to the National Government which provides the starving and destitute with bread and coal, which gives back freedom and honor to the German people, and sweeps away with an iron broom everything un-German from the German lands."

It is true that other voices too were raised on the Right. Hilger, the leader of the German National Land League, declared, on December 19th, 1923, that although as a German National he did not like all the Government's doings, "Yet," he went on, "whoever does not place himself behind the Government, is a destroyer. Throw out all those who say that this man or that, if he came to the head, would make us pay less taxes. Not one could do it better. Most imagine their organization as a machine for tax-evasion. Quite the contrary is true: we must do everything to keep the state going."

Stresemann had found a valuable ally in the President of the Reich Land League, Dr. Rösicke, who declared his readiness to coöperate in Stresemann's policy, for which he showed a great

understanding. He was unable, however, to gain adherents for his views within the Reich Land League, whose members preferred to play at Nationalist politics rather than look after the interests of their own industry.

Stresemann's brief Government consisted of three successive Cabinets. Against the third of these, votes of censure were introduced first by the German National and German People's parties on the ground that Stresemann's policy was "un-National," then by the Communists and, finally, for the reasons given, by the Social Democrats. Each of those votes of censure would have been rejected by the other Parties, because of the grounds on which they were based. Stresemann, however, did not wish to carry on the Government on the crutches of rejected votes of censure; he demanded through his Party a clear vote of confidence and, when this was unobtainable, resigned on November 23rd. The fact that he was asked the same day by spokesmen of the opposition to help in forming a new Government, did not shake his determination.

We have repeatedly had to speak about the ungratifying opposition which Stresemann found in every camp; sometimes this opposition degenerated into enmity. Hence it is not uninteresting

In the Garden of the Hotel Esplanade, Locarno, October, 1925

From left to right: Dr. Kiep, Head of the Imperial Press Bureau; Herr von Schubert, Dr. Stresemann, Dr. Luther, Herr Kempner

to recall the press notices which, after the fall of the cabinet cast a backward glance over Stresemann's activity. They form a conciliatory ending to a period during which Stresemann was waging a struggle against opposition both at home and abroad, a struggle whose issue rested only on Faith, Will and Hope. Whilst the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* makes shift with the somewhat obscure sentence "The path is clear for a policy of National determination and of clear-cut aims," Count Westarp writes: "The fight with Dr. Stresemann for his Chancellorship has been fought out, I should like to lower my sword in greeting. The fight which has filled recent weeks, was not directed against the man, whose earnest striving and great ability in the sphere of Parliamentary politics I esteem, but against the idea which he represented." And one of Stresemann's most bitter opponents, Friedrich Hussong, who is still, at the time of writing, bitterly opposing Stresemann in the interests of Hugenberg, wrote at the time: "On the day when the Cabinet fell, no one in the whole Parliamentary crowd cut so good and dignified, nay so imposing a figure as Herr Stresemann. The Chancellor Stresemann is gone, the German Stresemann remains."

CHAPTER IX

FOREIGN MINISTER

CERTAIN qualities in Bismarck's political methods are frequently praised—the openness of his language and the frankness with which he frequently spoke about his plans. Stresemann has often been reproached with the same qualities; straight talking about his aims and intentions; and people have found fault with him as a political tactitian. If Stresemann has spoken his mind regarding his intentions, in speeches destined for the public, and has frequently expressed very advanced views which may have sounded like a mockery in face of actual conditions, it was not so much from tactical motives as from a consciousness of the strength of his policy. He foresees developments and ideas which, as often happens in history, come with the force of natural phenomena. The questions that remain unsolved by such intuitive foresight are those of when and how. What distinguishes a statesman, is that he sees coming events but endeavors so to direct the stream that it will drive the mill-wheel

of the nation's interests. An early recognition of the ideas which will influence world history in the future, constitutes genius in a statesman, makes him a leader, but also necessarily forces him into opposition to the lethargy of the public, who are wont to acclaim new ideas only when still newer ones have begun to knock at the gate of destiny.

Before the war, during the war and during the bitterest phases of the Franco-German struggle after Versailles, Stresemann pointed to the inter-relation of the interests of the European peoples and to the fact that their destiny was a common one. That has nothing to do with such ideas as Coudenhove-Kalergi's, nothing with his slightly fantastic idealism, but Stresemann's ideas were derived from his knowledge of the economic nexus, and from his intuitive perception of political evolution. In order to be able to rebuild the edifice of European politics, it was first necessary to level the ground, and to clear away the débris which the Versailles Treaty had left, and the new barriers which it had erected.

Stresemann and his Party are frequently reproached with vacillation. Granted. The Conservatives might possibly boast of absolute consistency, in their complete rejection of any

development. The German Nationals could claim consistency in practice only, for in theory they too have learned the ways of Foreign Policy. But so far as vacillation goes: whoever tries to reach a peak by unexplored paths will inevitably miss his way, retrace his steps and seek again. The goal remains the same. That, surely, was the meaning of the axiom laid down by the National Liberal Union in their declaration of 1867: "The Ways are changeable, the Aims eternal." Stresemann has embraced that axiom, since he is profoundly Liberal, both as a man and as a politician.

What we admire in the great men of world history is less what they have done, than the faith they had in themselves and their mission, a faith which illumined their spirit during the darkest hours. Frederick the Great at Kollin, Stein's faith in Prussia and Germany after 1806, Bismarck's faith in German unity, which gave him the strength to push through the Nicolsburg Peace. The contrast between Stresemann's noblest striving, his faith and hope in the future of Germany and his apparent failures—his rejection by large classes of the people, was probably at its greatest when he resigned the Chancellorship. In those days one could not

help being reminded of a saying of Stresemann's own: "In Politics what tells in the long run is not talent, but character." About that time he defined the contrast between politician and statesman as follows: "The statesman as distinguished from the politician is great, because he is forced by his deeper insight, often without hard facts to go upon, to dare to swim against the stream of public opinion and at times to pursue a policy which he must admit is not likely to win acceptance until much later, probably when he, its initiator, is no longer alive." The removal of the obstacles at home and abroad could only be achieved through the unreserved dedication of his whole self and the tasks he had undertaken, and the proof he thus gave, of his confidence in himself and his aims. Like all great men in history, he is inwardly humble concerning himself and his work; he feels, though with full consciousness of his own personality, that he is only a common laborer at the building of the great cathedral of Humanity, the completion of which no individual will live to see. But faith in the evolution of mankind, and in a divinely ordered universe, is what gives him the strength to carry on his work.

In a speech, delivered before the Union of

German Students, Stresemann has made a personal confession:

"The greatest reproach leveled against me in public life is that of being an inveterate optimist, and it is only a step from that to the rosy spectacles through which political opponents say I look at things. My first rejoinder to that is as follows: I grant that I am an inveterate optimist. Every one has to be an optimist at some time in face of the tasks which confront him during his life, and that applies especially to the politician and the statesman.

"Things had come so near to the verge of collapse, and particularly maybe at the time when, as Chancellor, I was at the head of the Reich, that if those who wished to stem the adverse tide, had not believed the tide could be stemmed, no one would have had the moral strength to advance. At this time, more than at any other, we must have the faith that can remove mountains, and an outlook that does not measure the happenings of our day, by the span of a human life. What matters is not that some individual should live to see the transformation, whatever it may be, which Germany is to experience. For, compared with actual evolution, the individual life is as a drop in the ocean.

"No, what matters is whether, viewed in an historical perspective, the German people will arise again. And in that connection we are perhaps losing our standards if we view a brief tale of years as a great event, and fail to consider how little it means in the centuries during which the destinies of nations are forged."

We need not feel surprised if at first the German people were unable to follow Stresemann. His path was new, and Stresemann had yet to win the confidence of the public. Events made it appear at first as though results were telling against his policy. In those days he might have echoed the words of Bismarck: "There is no man in Europe, between the Seine and the Memel, between the Tiber and the Elbe, who is more hated than I."

But at that time, the time of his most arduous struggle against foreign prejudice and for the confidence and trust of his own fellow countrymen, Stresemann verified what he had once said as a young politician: "Before you attack another's opinion, you must first take off your hat to it." He has never interpreted attacks in a personal spirit, but always as being a fight for the only thing that mattered, the best means of liberating Germany. Not even the fact that calumnies of

the meanest and basest kind sometimes mingled with the higher motives, could shake his faith in mankind, though no doubt he sometimes felt a bitter taste in his mouth, when persons who had every reason to be grateful to him turned away from him at such times as his star seemed about to be setting. The outstanding example of how not to fight was given by Count Reventlow. He had to submit to being branded in public as a calumniator, without clearing his position. The "knightly" weapons used by that nobleman were personal libels on Stresemann. The short sense of his long-winded arguments was that Stresemann wished to lead Germany into servitude as the debtor of international capital, and that he did not care what means he adopted for that purpose; that the inflation had been caused by Stresemann at the bidding of a "Central Bureau of World Capital" in New York, and so forth. Regarding the Ruhr struggle Reventlow gives the essence of his political wisdom in the following sentence: "In future Dr. Stresemann will be able to say to himself with satisfaction, when recalling his 'Ruhr struggle': The traces of my days on the Stock Exchange will last until the end of time."

We do not mention Count Reventlow in order

to refute calumnies, time alone will do that. But in a biography of Stresemann one cannot leave unmentioned the fact that Reventlow's book ran into seven editions. For whoever wishes to describe Stresemann's work must point out, again and again, what resistance he had to overcome among his own people, in order to produce his effect abroad. As a matter of fact not even Reventlow can have felt quite at his ease. When the Dawes Report was accepted, he wrote that the French did not need to evacuate the Ruhr, for the Agreement said "procéder à," which meant they could begin, and they might end, whenever they pleased . . . etc. When the French refused Reventlow as their ally and interpreter, and evacuated the Ruhr in spite of him, he evidently grew a trifle anxious about his other predictions and wrote that perhaps the payments in accordance with the Dawes Report would be reduced after all, but only because international world capital wished to retain Stresemann at the helm. In short, any success which Stresemann gained anywhere ought to be suspect to the German people, as it would be due to the fact that Stresemann was the devoted servant of every country but his own. Why does not Count Reventlow write a revised history of the world?

What a grateful subject he would find in Napoleon!

One of the favorite charges brought against Stresemann by the Nationalists is that he is a Free Mason. Since Ludendorff coined the gorgeous phrase that the Free Masons train their members to be "artificial Jews," the Nationalists have been provided with the key to Stresemann's policy and character, as they understand it.

Mention has been made that Stresemann, when a student, was interested in Freemasonry and wrote about it. Whoever really knows anything of Freemasonry or has ever tried to enter into its spirit—a thing which must be easy enough even for a layman—would see that Stresemann, whether a member of a lodge or not, is imbued with the spirit which united Germany's great Freemasons: Goethe, Fichte, Herder, Blücher, Gneisenau, Stein, the Old Emperor, the Emperor Frederick III. It is an unreserved devotion to the people and the state, fused with the consciousness derived from the Weimar Humanists, that one is something more than a loyal citizen, namely a man, in the deepest sense of the word, as implied in Goethe's phrase: "A man must be noble, helpful and good."

After the sufferings the German people had en-

dured, and the injustices they had borne, it was quite natural that they should believe in improvement through international agreements. Since Versailles, Germany had been isolated by the muzzling of her foreign policy and the effects of inflation. Her people had lost the feeling that Germany was one of the comity of nations, bound to and dependent upon others. Stresemann took that fact, in itself a truism, for his starting-point. The first necessity was to get rid of that isolation. Germany had made the great mistake during the war of looking on while American capital became interested solely in the affairs of the Allies, until one day America took the next logical step, and threw in her lot with the Allies politically. It was a very simple step from the fact to the inference that one must attract American capital and the interest of capitalist circles in America towards Germany, with a view to interesting America politically in Germany later on. Side by side with his efforts for an immediate understanding with France, Stresemann's endeavors were directed towards drawing on to the German side those foreign countries who had taken up a neutral position in the post-war struggle between France and Germany.

At home the chief thing was to get France to

relinquish her special claims on the Rhine and Ruhr, to cut the ground from under her feet, in the literal sense. Under her demand for special pledges, France had taken whole regions under her suzerainty and held them fast as economic security for her demands. The moment better and wider securities were given to her, she could no longer give a semblance of economic necessity to her political schemes on the Rhine and Ruhr. Stresemann therefore aimed at giving France the guarantee from the whole Reich in place of special pledges for her requirements. In this Stresemann's policy was not based merely on sober political and economic considerations but also on questions of national morality. It was necessary for industry and agriculture to provide security instead of the Ruhr district alone, and Stresemann championed this policy. He was able to remind the public that in East Prussia, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, agriculture had unhesitatingly complied with the same demands. He did not dare to estimate the patriotism of the agricultural classes in the year 1924, lower than at the time of Freiherr von Stein. Strangely enough, the very circles who had previously shouted that no sacrifice of life and treasure would be too great if they could free the Ruhr, grew very reserved when

actually called upon to make financial sacrifices for that purpose.

Still the opposition to Stresemann was due less to material reasons than to theory and party propaganda. The right wing parties had realized that no understanding with France was possible, so long as all the military strength was on one side. So far as might was concerned, Germany's hopes of successfully combating France were doomed to failure. Hence the deep distrust against Stresemann, who had the audacity to reach an understanding with France, although he had always been an adherent of a policy of might. It never occurred to the right parties to transform this concept of might and to lift the struggle for power on to another plane. By this means the military factor could gradually be excluded from the struggle for power. At first people did not understand the course Stresemann was adopting to that end. Later on he was in many instances opposed from motives of internal policy, because at home he was beating the politicians who advocated might, with their own weapons. He was engaging in a policy of might, but in a different sense from the traditional one. During the war Germany realized the importance of ideas as a factor in *realpolitik,* when she found herself un-

able to compete with her enemies in propaganda. The importance of ideas, however, grew as the peoples intervened as self-determining factors in high politics, and as statesmen were forced to listen more and more to whisperings of public opinion, whether favorable or unfavorable themselves. The Ruhr struggle was lost in the concrete but won in the abstract, for France had failed to attain her deeper object, and the world had seen that Germany was still holding together, and that the populations of the Rhine and Ruhr in spite of humiliation, rapine and danger still clung with redoubled pride to their German nationality. The respect Germany had won abroad and the self-confidence she had gained at home, awakened in the countries hitherto hostile a new confidence in her. The moral damage done to her by the Versailles Treaty was counteracted by the honorable way she had fought on the Rhine and Ruhr. But that was not sufficient in itself to awaken the practical interest of foreign countries in the Reich. Before that could happen, might had to come into play to the fullest extent. The conflict with France was proceeding along two lines: reparations and security. The first object was to conquer in the economic sphere, for no political or ideal consideration was of any avail

so long as Germany had to fear a relapse into financial inflation, and that danger persisted so long as France had the whip-hand in Reparations. Germany, as an economic factor, as seller and as buyer, was indispensable; that was the principle which sounded through all Stresemann's speeches after Versailles, and which now received full emphasis. Economically Germany might be a dangerous factor if it were omitted from calculation; that was the perception to which Stresemann's policy proceeded the other countries, and which the United States was the first to acknowledge openly. The economic damage which Versailles had attempted to do her, was overcome in 1924, because German policy knew how to bring economic might into play and, above all, how to interest foreign countries in German trade. At that time the phrase "international *realpolitik*" was coined to describe Stresemann's methods. The phrase has a certain aptness, for the *real* necessity of reaching an economic understanding with Germany led to immediate results of a national character, namely the admission that Germany could not be preserved economically so long as her sovereignty was curtailed.

It is not the purpose of this book to write a political history of Germany, although the policy

of the Reich cannot be separated after 1923 from the personality of Stresemann. We must therefore not dilate upon the Dawes Report and the general conflict of theories regarding its significance. It adopted as a premise the demand for the evacuation of the Ruhr, it advanced the idea that Germany must not be forced to pay more than she could pay from revenue and surplus, unless her currency was to be once more endangered. It set a limit to the German payments and, above all, it deprived France of the power of resorting independently to any measures she might choose. In this way one of the most dangerous points in the Versailles Treaty was overcome, the power given to France to make unrealizable economic demands, and then to resort to political measures if they were not complied with. What France had not obtained at Versailles—the Rhine frontier—she had hoped to obtain through the economic clauses of the Treaty. What subsequent events showed to be the most dangerous point in the Versailles Treaty was overcome by Stresemann, thanks to the Dawes Report.

Certainly the Dawes Report laid burdens upon Germany for the future, even heavy burdens. But Stresemann compared the two alternatives:

either no burdens and no freedom, or burdens with freedom. And the choice could not be a difficult one for a politician concerned with the honor of his country. The attacks on his policy centered round the point that Stresemann had mortgaged the State Railway and had assumed obligations for industry and agriculture. Both the mortgaging of the State Railway and the obligations on industry and agriculture had been offered to the Entente by Cuno, though with less happy results. Still Cuno's offers are in part identical with Stresemann's. We have already dealt with the importance of those burdens from a general point of view. But Stresemann emphasized that it was an accepted principle in private life and in International Law, that the creditor was entitled to movable pledges and to facilities for controlling the financial conduct of his debtor. Moreover, the United States, after Wilson's unfortunate appearance at Versailles, had withdrawn almost entirely from European affairs. Now they were offering to mediate in the Reparations question, and the Experts' Report bore the name of one of the most eminent American financiers, so that the American people were again concerned. The Americans could congratulate themselves that they had decided the

war, and that they had now brought about a definite turn towards peace. Thus Stresemann said in the Reichstag:

"Public opinion in America sees in what you call the Dawes Report the economic scriptures of the present day, a conception which is apt, in that country, to be expressed in a catchword: 'We decided the war, now we have made the peace.' Whoever opposes that—I am speaking only negatively—must reckon with the opposition of the greatest of world powers. A politician[1] who certainly does not belong to the Left, quite rightly sees in the intervention of the United States one of the momentous turns in world history."

That is the legend of the "economic Bible," a phrase which Stresemann is supposed to have coined himself to describe the Dawes Report. When he was defending the Dawes Report, the German National Deputy Quaatz shouted: "An excellent speech for the other side!" For the first time during his 17 years of parliamentary activity Stresemann was called to order, for his reply. He declared Quaatz's remark to be the most infamous charge one could make against a German statesman who was fighting with all his strength for the fatherland. His indignation is

[1] The German National Deputy Hoetzch. (Author's note.)

understandable despite the host of political and personal attacks of the most venomous kind, the ill-natured abusive letters with which he was inundated. A former member of the Russian Duma, Freiherr von Freytagh-Lorringhoven, asserted as "champion of the German race," that Stresemann's conciliatory policy towards France was inspired by his father-in-law's interest in Czecho-Slovak factories. At that time the department responsible for the Foreign Minister's personal safety had to provide a bodyguard of detectives whenever he went out. The memory of Erzberger and Rathenau was still too fresh, and the attitude of the Nationalists had changed too little.

Stresemann justified his policy to his own party in a great speech at Hanover on March 30, 1924, which subsequently became known under the heading "Through sacrifice and Toil to Freedom," as one of his most brilliant and profound addresses. In that sentence he characterized the path he wished to pursue in foreign politics. The difficulties it brought him at home were overcome psychologically. Humanly speaking, it is probably one of his noblest achievements that even during those bitter struggles, often conducted by his opponents with the utmost rancor, he tried to understand the opposition and to find its psy-

chological justification. Even in the thickest of the fight, he defended the opponents in the interests of something higher—national unity. He understood the young men who were banding themselves together in national associations, knowing that the policy he was pursuing was too hard for them to understand, and apparently too inglorious. "They would not be young men at all if they did not feel the romantic urge; a man who is indifferent to the purple flower Romance, must be a miserable old fogey."

The elections of May, 1924, brought a heavy defeat to the German People's Party. Its leader had deliberately assumed all responsibility, and the Party had followed him, for the most part unwillingly. No great results had yet appeared, and the masses of voters had realized, after the stabilization of the currency, how poor they had become, how much the lost war and the inflation had cost them. They put the blame, unjustly, on the man and the Party who had dared to submit a balance-sheet with a view to opening a new account. Economic management in State and Reich had often been demanded, and to balance his estimates Stresemann, while still Reich Chancellor, had begun to reduce the staffs of his departments. The result was a leaflet which ran: "Workers,

Signing the Treaty of Locarno at the Foreign Office, London, December 1, 1925

employees, civil servants, if you wish to lose your jobs, if you wish to starve—you and your families —vote for the German People's Party."

Stresemann went on his way unswervingly. He was soon justified by the French elections, which brought a victory for the idea of reconciliation, which Stresemann had first advocated. They followed a week after the German elections and resulted in the fall of Poincaré. On the very day that Stresemann resigned his Chancellorship, the French Chamber, including the Socialists, expressed their confidence in Poincaré, and the latter was able in December, 1923, to assert, to France's satisfaction, that the dates fixed for the evacuation had not yet come into force. Now he was overthrown, and Herriot who was supposed to be a supporter of reconciliation was in his place. Stresemann's opponents said that the French elections, which changed the distribution of Party strength and enabled him to continue his policy, were a stroke of luck for him. The converse, surely, is true: It was not a lucky change in conditions in France that enabled him to continue his policy. He was able to pursue his policy, because while freeing Germany it was capable at the same time of satisfying France; because he had convinced the French people that a new course would

be steered, and that he believed himself in a policy of Franco-German reconciliation. That is why there was a redistribution of Party strength in the French Chamber. But one would like to remind those people who always wish to account for Stresemann's successes on a plea of extreme good luck, of Goethe's saying: "The fool rarely sees how closely merit and good luck are intertwined."

A statesman without luck is a contradiction in terms. But Stresemann's supposed luck never came to him without effort, it was always the fruit of careful preparation and protracted thought. Stresemann only won success in the end, because he never relaxed his efforts to carry through his policy. It was made difficult for him, in all conscience, and nowhere more so than in Germany, though he sought continually to carry with him the widest possible sections of German parliamentary representation.

After the May elections Marx tried, at the express desire of the German People's Party, to induce the German Nationals to join the Government. That plan came to nothing because the Government sought a solution of the Reparations problem on the basis of the Experts' Report, while the German Nationals wished to base their solu-

tion on the Dawes Report. These were subtleties, behind which lurked a more serious matter: the German Nationals' demand that Stresemann should be removed from the post of Foreign Minister. The People's Party itself placed the decision in the hands of their leader. Stresemann thereupon informed the Reich Chancellor in writing that he was willing to resign, if he stood in the way of an understanding with the German Nationals. But since Marx himself had endorsed Stresemann's policy in London and knew that the whole course of foreign policy would be jeopardized if Stresemann were sacrificed, he did not accept the condition. The German People's Party then turned back to their leader.

These wearisome and unpleasant negotiations finally led to the formation of the Marx Cabinet, with Stresemann in charge at the Foreign Office, and the negotiations regarding the Experts' Report were able to proceed. On August 5th, 1924, the German delegation went to London, where representatives of the Entente Governments had already been in session. The delegation consisted of Marx, Stresemann and the Reich Minister of Finance, Luther. The Dawes Report, with which the Government declared themselves in agreement, subject to the approval of parliament,

brought at last the first tangible success. But the first political success came with the fixing of the German payments and the settlement of the transfer problem, whereby the trustees of the Report assumed responsibility for the German currency. In future France was no longer to resort to measures of her own, but unanimity had to exist regarding any default on Germany's part and the measures to be taken in consequence. Moreover the United States had to give their assent. That America was again interested in the European question was the most important thing of all, for a genuine desire for reconstruction was in this way guaranteed. Poincaré's plans for separating the Rhineland from the Reich had definitely failed, and French policy was turned into a new direction. The greatest difficulty was the evacuation of the Ruhr and the Sanction towns. Herriot had demanded that this question should not be raised in London. The fact that it did come up was due to Stresemann, who sought an interview with MacDonald on the very evening of his arrival in London and handed him a letter in which the delegation declared that the evacuation of the Ruhr was an integral part of the negotiations, and that no agreement would be possible until that question was settled. The

result was not a complete victory for the Germans. Only Dortmund and the occupied towns outside the Rhine and Ruhr districts were evacuated immediately, but a time limit of one year was laid down for the other districts. It was very difficult to make the French delegation understand that the occupation of the so-called Sanction towns Düsseldorf and Duisburg-Ruhrort was illegal, and that their evacuation was essential. How they had come to be occupied had almost been forgotten, and they had been tacitly included in the Rhineland zone occupied in accordance with the Treaty. This question of the Sanction towns led to an ironic comedy, for the letter in which their evacuation was promised "went astray" after the fall of Herriot, and it required considerable efforts before it was found among the French archives. That lost letter contributed a great deal towards establishing mutual confidence between Stresemann and Briand—a confidence which has frequently been the target of malicious attacks, although it is so important for the continuance of the Franco-German conversations. Poincaré would never have assented to the evacuation of the Sanction towns, without having documentary proof of the French obligation on his desk. But even while the letter was still being sought at

Peretti de la Rocca's, at Herriot's in Lyons, and in the archives of the Quai d'Orsay, Briand declared that the word of the German statesmen was proof enough. When the letter finally turned up, the evacuation was already in full swing.

The Treaty was signed on August 30th, and its passage through the Reichstag proceeded smoothly except where a change was involved in the Constitution. The transformation of the Reichsbahn into a private company did require a constitutional change, and in view of the parliamentary situation, the bill could not be carried without some support from the German Nationals. Up to the last moment the Nationals declared that they would never sign that "shameful Treaty." At the eleventh hour the German Nationals mobilized the necessary ayes, and the ratification of the Treaty was secured. The Nationals had not abated their propaganda one jot. The one-half of the party who had voted against the measure, could still rage as before against Germany's "enslavement," and the press soon forgot the other half who had assented. So the fight against Stresemann and his policy went on as before.

When Stresemann took over the Foreign Ministry as well as the Chancellorship, the prevalent

opinion was that he would regard the former as a post of honor and leave its direction to the Permanent Secretary. After his first speeches on foreign policy, people consoled themselves with the thought: "Never mind, let Stresemann talk, but the policy itself will still remain in the department." That he acted and acted successfully was something for which the True Nationals would not forgive him. They could not help seeing that in the long run successful action counted for more than the biggest promises and propagandist phrases.

The first result of the acceptance of the Dawes Report was a German loan of eight hundred millions, which was immediately over-subscribed. It signified a material as well as a political success, for the rush of intending subscribers proved how greatly confidence in the recovery of the Reich had increased abroad. Economically, this was the turning point in the great struggle which had begun in 1914, for American Capital which after the outbreak of war concentrated on the Allied States, now began to take an interest in Germany. The interests of capital were thus divided, and the balance of political interests was equalized.

In home politics the acceptance of the Dawes Report resulted in a demand from the German

Nationals, certain points having been agreed, to be given a share in the Government. This was originally conceded in the hope of broadening the parliamentary basis on which the Dawes policy rested. But the Democrats declared that they would not serve in any government which included German Nationals, and so it was found impossible to form the hoped-for Cabinet of national unity. Accordingly the electoral battle blazed up again on December 7th, 1924. Its outcome was the formation of the Luther Cabinet, which included German National Ministers, and was the fifth cabinet in which Stresemann sat as responsible director of Foreign Affairs.

The idea that the so-called victorious powers could recover economically and count upon the payments to which they were entitled under the Versailles Treaty only if Germany herself were financially restored, had won through and been confirmed by the Dawes Report. This was an admission that all nations are financially and economically interdependent. But the other great question was still unsolved, the question summed up for France in the concept of security, and for Germany in the fact that French troops were still stationed on the Rhine. By virtue of the Dawes Report these troops were no longer free to inter-

A Family Group in the Garden of the German Foreign Office

fere with the economic life of the State, but they constituted a grave hindrance to the political and psychological authority of the German Government. France had stabilized her military power by the Versailles Treaty. She had her own troops on the Rhine and had given military and financial support to the eastern border states, especially Poland. There could be no question of breaking through this military cordon by force. It is true that in certain quarters vague memories arose of 1813, and people hoped that somewhere and somehow a miracle might happen, but no preparations of any sort were made for such a miracle. It is not like Stresemann to hope for miracles. The old world, the old idea, had been rendered obsolete by Versailles, and to oppose the French with their own weapons was impossible. There was nothing for it but to create a new world. Stresemann's saying, "Whoever wishes to pursue effective *realpolitik* must have bold dreams" has been sneered at and misunderstood by all but a few. It matters nothing whether you use the word "dreams" or "prophetic imagination." The essential thing is the creative idea, the capacity for imagining new forms, for creating new images first in one's imagination in order to convert them afterwards into reality. Briand

has pointed out that the stimulus to Locarno came from Germany. One could go further: the entire development which came to be epitomized in the words "Locarno Policy" was born of Stresemann's creative imagination. To quote "Faust": "Woe woe! thou hast destroyed the beautiful world; then built it up in thy bosom!"

There was nothing of a similar nature which could be opposed to the power of the French. So it was imperative, here as in the questions of trade and Reparations, to transfer the conflict to more favorable ground. France very soon recognized the danger of such a move, and the French disciples of might did everything they could to bring the other Entente states on to their side and thus to preserve France's hegemony, which rested on military power. Hence France's efforts regarding the so-called Geneva Protocol, by which she wished to have the inviolability of her own frontiers and of those of the border states one-sidedly guaranteed by England against Germany. It was another attempt to stabilize the European balance of power by means of military alliances, and to prevent a general solution of problems pending with Germany; for such a solution was bound to destroy the preponderance of France and reduce her to an equal

among equals. The Geneva Protocol fell through, owing to England's refusal to guarantee the eastern frontiers. England was able to base her position on Versailles, where Lloyd George had declared the eastern frontiers to be an obstacle to a lasting and peaceful settlement. Now it became apparent for the first time that France had carried her policy of force too far.

In his struggle for the new conception of the policy of might, *i.e.*, peaceful as opposed to warlike might, Stresemann remained true to his former ideas. For in September, 1923, though hardly any one then understood him, he had declared at Stuttgart:

"If it is proposed that those states which have interests on the Rhine should unite mutually to guarantee for a period to be defined, the integrity of the territorial status quo, Germany will always be ready to join such an alliance. For in this way the danger of renewed conflicts and fresh bloodshed could be avoided. A partition of Germany, an attempt at detaching German territories, or at dominating the industries and transport in her frontier districts, would permanently militate against the spirit of such an agreement."

After the acceptance of the Dawes Report

Stresemann declared that the first position could not be held without further steps which logically resulted from it. The majority of people in all European countries and the United States set great hopes on the results of the Dawes Report. Hence the warning which Stresemann gave in December, 1924, to a Conference of foreign press representatives, a warning which was bound to find an echo abroad:

"If the Rhineland remains occupied, and if the policy of exploiting the military control report is persisted in, that means a great moral weakening for the supporters of the Dawes Report."

At the beginning of 1925 Stresemann opened his great peace offensive. Even before his Chancellorship, he had acted on the suggestion of the English Ambassador, Lord d'Abernon, and discussed steps of this nature with the former Reich Chancellor Cuno. Thus he was able to base his position on preliminary work done by the Cuno Cabinet, especially on their Note of May 2nd, 1923. On February 9th, 1925, he issued a note which inaugurated his new peace policy. It suggested the replacement of military securities by peaceful ones, proposed a number of agreements between the powers interested in the Reich, notably England, France and Italy, and expressed

readiness for the peaceful settlement of juridical and political conflicts with other states also. It gave a few examples of possible solutions and suggested that others might easily be added to them. The tone of the note differed from the usual official method in its form and in the non-binding and conciliatory nature of its proposals. It ended: "For the rest, it is a matter for consideration whether it would not be advisable so to shape the security pact that it will prepare the way for a world convention to include all states, after the manner of the 'Protocole pour le règlement pacifique des différends internationau' set up by the League of Nations, and that, in the event of the realization of such a world convention, the security pact will be absorbed by it or incorporated into it."

There is an old legal axiom which states that law is the weak man's might; Stresemann wished to have it applied internationally to the disarmed and defenseless Germany—so long as wars were recognized by international law as a political weapon. So far as Germany was concerned his point of view should have been self-evident, if the parties of the right had taken the trouble to reflect upon it. It was much more difficult to

make France recognize that in her case also, although she could safely hope for victory in any future war, the elimination of possible causes of war and the exclusion of war itself would be the best security. By taking the initiative, on Germany's behalf, in this peace offensive, Stresemann has given Germany a high position in the estimation of foreign countries not directly interested in the Franco-German dispute. It appeared ridiculous to every German that France should feel herself threatened. That, however, was not the question. The point was that France's right to special securities was recognized by England and the United States, who had meanwhile grown more friendly toward Germany. A statesman who did not pursue politics by theory and purely objective reality, but who pursued *realpolitik* with due consideration for the imponderables, was bound to consider that psychological factor as a reality of the first order and to attempt to cut the ground from under France's feet. If Germany offered security for a great and lasting peace, then France could not stand up before the world opinion with a sordid policy of military chicanery. Stresemann was conscious from the beginning—and experience has taught how right he was—that his peace

policy is not a question for settlement to-day or to-morrow, and that any change of heart in France would be hindered by the hundred conflicting opinions in France itself. The fact that in a disarmed Germany only a section of the people recognized the value of such a peace policy, indicated clearly how difficult the enforcement of the same policy would necessarily be in France, which was armed to the teeth and kept by the military class in an artificial intoxication over her victory.

The complete frankness with which Germany made clear her plans and ideas may have retarded the march of events. But in that frankness lies the strength of German policy, and it will yet grow stronger as time goes on. The guarantee of a durable peace and that no attempt will be made to change the frontiers by force of arms, is by no means the same as a declaration that European frontiers, particularly those of Germany, are to be immovable for all time. Any such promise, made by a Government whose foreign policy was directed by Stresemann, would never have been believed abroad, where Stresemann's personality was more closely observed and more shrewdly judged than at home, where sections of the public were blinded by party passion.

The Note of the German Government of July 20th, 1925, expressly states:

"The German Government regards it as self-evident that the possibility of adapting existing treaties to changed conditions, by peaceful negotiation, is not precluded for all time. Indeed the covenant of the League of Nations provides for such necessities."

In the same Note there was also mention of so-called retrospective action. The consequences which were bound to follow a policy of peace, were clearly pointed out. For if France put her signature to an international peace pact, thereby declaring that she believed in peace, she was acting inconsistently, if at the same time she kept her troops in the Rhineland. Any change in the concept of security automatically produces a change in the concept of power; the power of peace must exclude and invalidate the power of the sword.

The choice of the moment for starting the peace offensive was decided apart from general reasons, apart from the logical necessity to take a second step after the first one, by anxiety that if France were not compelled to solve the question of her security on the Rhine in conjunction with Germany, she might succeed in deciding the

Rhine question with the Allies against Germany. The specter of the Geneva Protocol was not yet wholly laid, and the probability that France would set aside her demands in the East in order to gain an alliance with England against Germany, was not to be denied. But a solution of the security question in conjunction with Germany was imperative for the Reich, so that Germany's own security might also be settled. Two years previously the French had been within an ace of fulfilling their hopes for the Rhine frontier or at least for a Rhenish state independent of the German Reich. Hence Germany perhaps needed her frontiers guaranteed more urgently than France, and the guarantee was to be obtained from France, under the joint guarantee of Great Britain. If an arrangement was come to between the Allies without Germany, then an opportunity for securing Germany's frontiers would scarcely occur again.

Although it was important for Germany that the pact should be concluded as soon as possible, Stresemann dared, on the very eve of the Locarno Conference, to notify the Allied governments of the German attitude on the question of war guilt. The position abroad had become so strong during the past two years, that at the very mo-

ment when Germany was seeking contact with her one-time enemies, Stresemann could afford to open up the most difficult and critical question in international relations, the war guilt question, and to declare that Germany could not recognize the guilt paragraph of the Versailles Treaty. In the Note of September 26th, 1925, when the date for the Locarno Conference had already been fixed, he stated:

"The German Government repeats the declaration contained in the Memorandum of September, 1924, that Germany's possible entry into the League of Nations must not be understood as an acceptance of the assertions on which Germany's international obligations are based, and which imply a moral indictment of the German People. The German Government believes that the manifesto to that effect issued on August 29th, 1924, by the German Government of the time, conduces to a mutual understanding and to a sincere reconciliation between the Nations."

CHAPTER X

LOCARNO AND GENEVA

IT is no easy task for the common people to understand a statesman who sets out on his career with great aims before him. But what constitutes greatness in a statesman is that he sees farther, and has the strength to overcome the resistance of his own people and, in virtue of his deeper insight, to draw them after him. The interchange of notes which preceded the Locarno Conference caused considerable clamor. People spoke of the renunciation of the possibility of rectifying the frontiers, of treason against the Reich, and charged Stresemann with being an archtraitor. Indeed, about the time of Locarno, German papers still put forward the demand that Stresemann should be arraigned before a State tribunal. Every possible precaution was taken when the delegation left Berlin. The hour of their departure was kept secret, the railway station was barred to the public, the trains were most carefully searched by detectives. A short

time previously well-founded reports of a plot to murder the delegates had been received, and by the wish of the authorities the train did not go right through to Locarno, but the delegation alighted at Bellinzona, on the Swiss frontier, and completed their journey in motor cars.

The Conference itself not only differed from all previous international conferences in which Germany had taken part since the war; it probably differed from any other great international conference in history, for it was entirely unofficial and had neither chairman nor agenda. There was to be a confidential and personal discussion between the leading responsible statesmen on foreign policy. The conference was first disturbed by the indiscretions of the Italian representatives, and conversations were also rendered difficult by the unfamiliarity of the members with each other and by their anxiety regarding public opinion at home. If politics is a matter of the psychology of nations, then at Locarno what was needed was applied personal psychology, so that relations of mutual confidence and faith might be established between leading statesmen of France, England and Germany. Stresemann was incapacitated for a few days by a slight fever, and thus the first private conversations between

Stresemann and Chamberlain and between Stresemann and Briand, could not take place before October 8th and 9th. These conversations have been described by a great journalist as "the first European conversations." Considerable ill-humor prevailed among the Allies at the number of demands the German delegation had brought with them to Locarno, and more than once the Conference was in danger of breaking up without result.

If, in spite of all, Locarno has proved a turning point in the history of the nations that was mainly due to private conversations and personal contacts, for which the excursions undertaken before the actual meetings offered an opportunity. One of the most important of these was the trip on Lake Maggiore, in the "Orange Blossom," which has given rise to so much comment. Chamberlain summed up the conference, after its happy ending, to the effect that no country was bested, and no particular country gained a special success. The international peace conference was to be the prelude to an era of peace which should benefit all countries alike and also demand sacrifices from them. After the signing, Briand declared:

"I have just signed the treaties and conven-

tions which have been prepared at Locarno. Therewith my mandate comes to an end. Hence I am now speaking for my own person, but with the certitude of expressing not only the point of view of my Government, but also that of the great majority of my fellow-countrymen.

"If we had only negotiated the provisions of a treaty, and if, having done so, we returned each to his own country, leaving it to chance whether the promises contained in that treaty would be realized, we should have made but an empty gesture. If that gesture is not accompanied by a new spirit, if it does not denote the beginning of an epoch of trust and coöperation, then it will not produce the great results which we expect from it. Locarno must mark the beginnings of a new Europe."

Stresemann, immediately after the signing, summed up the result in these words:

"We greet sincerely and joyfully the great development of the idea of peace in Europe, which, setting out from this Locarno Meeting, is to form, as the Treaty of Locarno, an important landmark in the history of the evolution of states and peoples in their relations one to another. We welcome in particular the view laid down in the final protocol of the conference, expressing

a firm conviction that the tense relations which have subsisted between the nations are now relaxed, and that the solution of so many political and economic problems, now to be settled, has been rendered easier. We have assumed responsibility for the treaty, because we believe that only a peaceful neighborly life can secure the development of the states and peoples; and this friendliness is of the utmost importance for the great and cultured European nations, whose peoples have endured such boundless sufferings during the past years. We have assumed them, in particular, because we are justified in believing that the political effects of the treaties which have been concluded, will especially benefit the German people, by rendering easier the conditions of Germany's political life."

From a practical point of view the Locarno Treaties were a success for Stresemann's policy, since they achieved a guarantee of the frontiers in the west and precluded warlike developments in the east, without, however—and that was essential for Germany—guaranteeing the eastern frontiers. Locarno further created the basis for Germany's entry into the League of Nations. Germany's success consisted in this: she could not simply submit to the general provisions, but

was bound as a disarmed State to secure for herself exceptional treatment under Paragraph 16 of the League of Nations Covenant. By a special provision in the event of an executive action by the League of Nations, Germany is secured against foreign troops marching through her territory, and Germany has reserved to herself the right of deciding, independently of the League of Nations provisions, whether and when she will participate in such executive action.

The arrival of the German delegation in Berlin had again to be kept secret from the German public. The heads of the diplomatic missions were on the platform, but there was no sign of any parade by the national unions, to cheer the Foreign Minister, such as had attended the return of Simon, as Foreign Minister, from the London Conference. The fact that Simon's negative attitude in London had led to the occupation of Düsseldorf, Duisburg and Ruhrort, made no difference to the Nationalists in Berlin. When Stresemann had submitted his Locarno policy to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Colonel von Rodenberg wrote in the *Preussische Landes-Zeitung,* which is the property of the *Kreuz-Zeitung:*

"When the Reich Cabinet gave Stresemann the

opportunity to defend his views on Locarno before the Foreign Affairs Committee, it surely accorded to him the same right of self-defense which is commonly granted to persons committed for murder with violence, or to any similarly useful member of society. Though some of our members may think Stresemann worse than a robber or murderer yet we consider the Cabinet's decision in permitting him to defend himself a right and proper one."

When the Reich President von Hindenburg expressed his agreement with Stresemann's policy, the *Deutsche Zeitung* wrote:

"To our bitter disappointment over the present trend of policy, is now added deep sorrow at the default of one of our best men. The black, white and red flags which waved their welcome to the first Nationalist Reich President, are lowered today to half-mast."

The relationship of the Locarno Powers to Russia was the subject of earnest discussion. Above all the question was debated whether the moral obligations which Stresemann had assumed toward the Western Powers at Locarno, had driven Germany into any attitude of hostility toward Russia. The interpretation which, on Germany's initiative, had been given to Article

16 should have sufficed in itself to rule out such ideas. Perhaps it was Russia's own fault that she resisted Locarno and asserted that an alliance against her was being hatched there. It is not true that Stresemann committed himself to a one-sided western policy: that would have been quite contrary to his ideas of foreign policy and diplomacy. He has denied the idea of a westward orientation as emphatically as he previously denied the assertion that he was steering toward France instead of toward England. For him the only thing that matters is the interests of the Reich, and in his opinion those interests demand a friendly relation between Germany and all her neighbors. The Locarno Treaty emphasized the effort toward friendship with the Western Powers, and hence its logical consequence was a corresponding treaty with Germany's great eastern neighbor, Russia. This was the so-called "Berlin Treaty."

Stresemann has spoken on the wireless about both the Berlin Treaty and the Locarno Treaty; undoubtedly a novel procedure for a German statesman. It meant the attempt—so far as possible—to give the great obscure public an opportunity of hearing him and of being instructed and, if necessary, converted by his direct appeal.

SIGNING OF THE TREATY WITH THE SOVIETS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN

From left to right: Herr von Schubert, Dr. Gaus, Herr Wallroth, Herr von Dirksen, Dr. Stresemann, M. Krestinski (Russian Ambassador to Berlin), M. Bratmann-Brodowski, M. Jakubowitch

For though Stresemann has gone his own way, regardless, when necessary, of public opinion, it has always been his endeavor to interest the public and to carry it with him. He does this less for his own sake, to gain support or to do his party a service, than for the sake of education. He saw one cause of Imperial Germany's downfall in the fact that people allowed the Government to do as it wished, and he does not desire the German public to resign itself to whatever Foreign Policy the Government pursues. He wishes the public to be informed, to understand and to collaborate.

In the address upon the Berlin Treaty Stresemann pointed out that the German statesmen who had inaugurated the Locarno policy were as deeply committed to it as any statesmen on the opposing side. The initiative in the Berlin Treaty was also taken by Germany in order to restore the psychological balance, for Locarno and the Berlin Treaty were not meant to cancel, but to supplement each other. Duly both together could guarantee a peaceful development for Europe.

Stresemann and Luther went to London on December 1st, 1925, for the signing of the treaties of Locarno. The ceremony itself turned out to be a much more solemn one, viewed objectively,

than the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. All who took part had a feeling that a true peace was being signed in London, which would cancel the Versailles Act, not paragraph by paragraph, not explicitly, but morally.

Chamberlain called Stresemann's attention to the fact that the portrait of Castlereagh had been hung in the conference hall for the occasion. Castlereagh was the man who had caused the immediate withdrawal of the troops of occupation from France, as the first and logical consequence when the Great Powers had again admitted France to their councils in 1818. On leaving the Conference one of the members quoted a sentence from Goethe's "Campaign in France": "Here to-day there begins a new epoch in world history, and you may say that you were present."

Stresemann, in his concluding address, summed up the meaning of the work done at Locarno. He said it was not so much a legal edifice based on political ideas, but an ideal for the future. The underlying intention had not been to create forms, but to build a structure based on the will of the peoples. The welcome accorded to the German members on English soil, the spontaneous and enthusiastic reception by the crowds, showed

that they knew how to estimate the value of that step toward a lasting peace.

Things were different in Germany. The German Nationals withdrew their ministers from the Cabinet, and the formation of the new Cabinet lasted from December 4th, till well into the second half of January, 1926. Even then the second Luther Cabinet only obtained a majority of ten votes in the Reichstag. The first "reactions" set in: alleviations in the régime of the Rhineland occupation, withdrawal of French troops and, above all, the striking of the Allied flags in the Cologne zone, which took place on January 31st, 1926, amid great rejoicings on the part of the population. Stresemann had given a warning against the idea that the future course of things would be too easy or unattended with friction.

Mussolini provided the first serious incident, which conflicted with everything epitomized by the "Locarno spirit." The vexations to which the Germans were subjected in the Tyrol had led, especially in South Germany, to protests. These were sufficient provocation for Mussolini to deliver a crude speech, attacking Germany and German Austria, a speech which in former times would probably have led to war. Mussolini knew that he could afford such heroism toward

a defenseless Germany, but he had probably not foreseen that his speech would involve him in a public diplomatic defeat. He adopted the threatening attitude of a warrior and was defeated before public opinion by a diplomatic speech of Stresemann's. A Berlin newspaper has described the speech thus:

"After Stresemann's first few sentences it became clear that the combatants were fighting with very different weapons. Mussolini had shown his muscles and brandished his club. Stresemann parried with the graceful, pliant foil of irony, of wit, of a superior intelligence. And he not only parried with great skill, he also took advantage of the many openings his uncouth adversary had offered him to make some home thrusts. And as always happens, brain ended by conquering brute strength. When Stresemann reminded the Italian dictator that in Germany there is freedom of the press, that the Reich Government does not possess the same power over public opinion as has been usurped elsewhere, the audience acknowledged the side-thrust at the terrorist methods of Fascism by an understanding smile. And when he went on with incomparable innocence to quote Mussolini's saying that the Italo-German disputes in history were caused by misunderstandings, in-

trigues and—mental conditions, the smile grows into the loud laughter of assent. But Stresemann met Mussolini not only with subtle irony, he did not disdain more downright weapons, in his effort to be better understood in Rome.

"The Reich Foreign Minister distinguished very sharply between Mussolini, who is the present master in Rome, and the Italian people, with whom Germany had maintained friendly relations in days gone by, and with whom in spite of the Fascist episode of Mussolini—Germany desires to live in friendship in the future. Dr. Stresemann yesterday dissociated himself from all provocative attempts to increase the irritation in Germany by false reports from Southern Tyrol. He stated that the reports concerning the banning of Christmas trees and the removal of the monument to Walther von der Vogelweide, were untrue, and was able to affirm that those false reports had not originated in the German Reich, and certainly not in the Wilhelmstrasse. But he reminded the Italian people that there were still many things which grievously hurt the German people through their sense of racial unity with their brothers in Southern Tyrol. In the name of the Reich Government and of the German people he declared that, since the inclusion of

Southern Tyrol in the Italian State had been settled by the Treaty of St. Germain, it was now a fact which Germany was not endeavoring to change. No responsible person in Germany desired to tamper with the Brenner frontier; the Reich Foreign Minister was able to point out that before Locarno the Italian Government had inquired whether the Brenner frontier was to come up for discussion, and Berlin had replied that the frontier did not affect the German Reich. Mussolini might be annoyed because he did not succeed in obtaining an international treaty guaranteeing the Brenner frontier, as the western pact guarantees the Franco-German frontier. But the Italian people must know that it has no reason for feeling threatened by Germany on the Brenner. Stresemann, recalled to the Italians the proclamations, manifestos and royal speeches, in which, immediately after the incorporation of Southern Tyrol, the Germans in the newly acquired territory were promised toleration in language and culture. The German people was only endeavoring to secure respect for the rights of a German minority, a respect which—the Reichstag greeted the assurance with loud applause—it is resolved to accord to the minorities within its own frontiers."

The March session of 1926 at Geneva brought the second, much graver crisis to the ideas of Locarno. Germany's entry into the League of Nations was on the agenda. Suddenly Spain and Brazil came forward with earlier claims, and they were followed by other powers. The German delegation, headed by Luther and Stresemann, opposed this development, by maintaining that Germany could not agree to any fundamental change in the composition of the League of Nations Council, as thereby the circumstances under which Germany had applied for admission would be altered. Owing to Brazil's veto the Geneva negotiations finally fell through, and there was a grave danger that the German representatives would be blamed for that failure, because of their unflinching defense of their position. Stresemann did not fail to recognize the danger involved in arousing the opinion of the world against the Reich. Germany had ignored this danger too often. But he believed—and events had proved him right—that Germany's position was already strong enough to withstand the strain of a refusal. The diplomatic victory could be gaged from the fact that the Locarno Powers, despite the failure of the Geneva conference, determined to adhere to the policy of Locarno and to let

the political reactions run their course despite the March session. On the whole the obstacles suddenly raised to Germany's entry into the League of Nations did not imply any objection to Germany, but showed the weak points in the technical structure of the League and made it all the more necessary to persist in the policy Germany had inaugurated. The March session at Geneva showed that Locarno could renew and sanify the idea of the League of Nations, and that process was only possible with Germany as a member. Hence it is not true to say that Germany danced attendance on the League Assembly. On the contrary: the powers tried everything to bring Germany's demands into harmony with the demands of other powers. The first attempt had failed. Stresemann knew perfectly well, and has said so, that in view of the fluctuating mood prevailing in Germany, he would have been applauded if he had thrown the Locarno pact, with a grandiose gesture, in the faces of the Locarno Powers, since of course the pact only became valid when Germany entered the League of Nations. True, he gaged the momentary mood aright, but he would have had to purchase cheap success with the disapproval of world opinion and thereby would have helped Poincaré's policy to triumph

in France. He was reproached from the Right with "unworthy" behavior. Their reproaches would have applied only to one who, for the sake of personal glory, which must soon fade, endangers the higher interests of the State.

The negotiations conducted in the summer of 1926 with members of the Belgian Cabinet on the restitution of Eupen-Malmédy to the German Reich, had progressed so far that Belgium declared her willingness to cede back those districts to Germany without plebiscite, merely by a vote of Parliament, in return for concessions in the question of the "Besatzungsmark." But the negotiations fell through at the last moment, presumably owing to the opposition of Poincaré who had now returned to power. But still, the intelligent public had been convinced by those negotiations that the Locarno treaties did not mean the permanent renunciation by Germany of one-time German territories, but only the renunciation of a desire to regain them by any kind of force. The fact that Belgium seriously negotiated with Germany regarding the restitution of Eupen-Malmédy, will furnish the basis for later and similar negotiations. That was rightly perceived by Poincaré, and therefore he vetoed the matter. Stresemann did not allow this failure to depress

him. He had a stronger faith in the idea of peace.

Stresemann used the months of leisure, while Parliament was not sitting, to make propaganda for his ideas in the country. The most profound and personal speeches he delivered that year in Germany, were those to the students at Cologne and to the German Students' Union in Berlin. In his great address on the "Student and the State," on July 6th, 1926, he explained, politically and personally, his ideas of the philosophy of history. The keynote of his ideas is expressed in the sentence inscribed on the wall of the German People's Party's room in the Riechstag: "The history of the world is the judgment of the world." He spoke of his conceptions of State and Constitution and the great postulates of international politics. Casting a backward glance over the immediate past, he said: "A leader bears the responsibility of action—he must act as his conscience bids—regardless of whether he be crucified by public opinion. That is true democracy: to lead the crowd and not to say: I am your leader—hence I follow you."

It was no accident that Stresemann chose, more than once, to expound his political and personal creed, the justification and explanation of his pol-

icy, before an audience of students. He knows that the ideas which he has disseminated can only reach maturity generations hence, and he seeks to prepare the soil for that maturity. But he rarely feels so much at ease as amongst a crowd of young men and women. It is perhaps a sign of his own essential youthfulness, that he loves to be surrounded by young people. To that inward youthfulness, too, may be due his inexhaustible humor, his intimacy with Nature, his receptiveness to her beauties and moods, and above all the great kindness of heart which he shows towards human beings, because he always feels somehow bound to them. He intimately shares in all the little events of the day; that is why the experiences of his holiday travels so quickly restore his energies and remain vividly in his memory. For instance, between the two struggles at Geneva, he visited a costume festival at Treysa in Hesse and was absorbed in all the joys and sorrows of the peasants and tradesfolk. From such communion with the people he draws new strength, like Antæus when he touched the earth, and the sound of the North Sea beating on the shore of his beloved Norderney may have echoed in his ears during the September negotiations at Geneva.

The telegram in which Drummond, the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, informed him of Germany's admission to the League of Nations, hangs to-day by the side of Stresemann's desk at the Foreign Office, proving the value he attaches to that piece of news, showing that he regarded Germany's entry into the League of Nations as the decisive turning-point in his policy, and wishes to be reminded of it.

Germany's reception into the League at Geneva proved a triumph for German policy. All manifestations had been expressly forbidden, but when Stresemann, accompanied by his faithful collaborators at the Foreign Office, Secretary von Schubert and Ministerial Director Gaus, entered the Hall of the Reformation, even the spectators on the platform no longer heeded the strict rules of the League, and the president Nintchich, recognizing that the hour was greater than the rules, allowed the cheering to continue. Not only Stresemann, but probably all those who witnessed the entry of the German delegation on September 10th, 1926, will look upon that hour as one of the most uplifting and significant in their lives. Seven years before Germany had seemed proscribed and outlawed forever among the nations; now, amid their cheers, she resumed her place as

one of the great powers. But even in his speech at that session Stresemann pointed to the questions which still awaited decision: Disarmament and war guilt. But all was irradiated by the great profession of his faith in politics and human evolution, which Stresemann made in his speech:

"I am of the opinion that no nation surrenders its own national life by becoming a member of the League of Nations. The Divine Architect of the earth did not create mankind as a uniform whole. He gave to the peoples different strains of blood; he gave them language as the sacred possession of their souls, he gave them countries of various kinds. But it cannot be the meaning of a divinely ordered world that men should turn their highest national achievements against each other and continually impede the general progress of culture. The man who serves humanity best is he who, rooted in his own nation, develops his spiritual and mental endowments to their highest capacity, so that, growing beyond the limits of his own nation, he is able to give something to the whole of humanity, as the great ones of all nations have done. Their names are written in the history of mankind. Thus nation and humanity join together in the realm of the spirit, and they may also join together in political endeavor, if the

will is present to serve the whole development."

Lloyd George described those words as the "classical definition of National and International."

The official conference was continued by the conversations at Thoiry, suggested by Briand, at which, besides Briand and Stresemann, only the former's *confidant,* Hesnard, was present. This was the result of the confidence which had grown up between the two statesmen and had given to each a faith, not only in the other's personality, but in his nation. Locarno was a beginning, Geneva the sequel, and Thoiry the conclusion. At Thoiry it became clear that Europe's recovery must be preceded by the removal of the obstacles which Versailles had put in the way of a mutual understanding. The Conversation of Thoiry reposed on the conviction of good will on both sides, and on the consciousness that each side must make sacrifices for the other, in order to attain the great goal of reconciliation. The reason why the conversation of Thoiry did not in practice lead to such speedy results as the public had hoped, is that Poincaré did his utmost to stabilize the franc by internal means.

In this way the German offer to mobilize the railway debentures became valueless, so that they

STRESEMANN

had nothing to offer in return for the evacuation of the Rhineland.

Briand and Stresemann both issued a warning against expecting too much from the Thoiry conversation. But after the reception accorded to the German Delegation at Geneva, after the extraordinary improvement in the temper of the peoples only seven years after Versailles, the impossible almost seemed possible. It was hard to dissuade the public from believing that the year 1927 must bring similar successes to 1925, the Locarno year, and 1926, the year of Germany's entry into the League of Nations.

Slowly Briand and Stresemann began to gain in popularity. In Paris, a few yards from the Unknown Soldier's grave, a Variety "sketch" was performed with a scene between Fritz and François, the valets of Stresemann and Briand. Both are waiting for their masters outside the Inn at Thoiry. Fritz says with a ruminative air:

"There was a time when we were enemies, Frenchy."

François: "To-day we have the same interests. Our chiefs are going to take breakfast here. Who would have thought of that, when we were lying on opposite sides of the Chemin des Dames? It really wasn't worth all the trouble."

Fritz: "What wasn't worth all the trouble, François?"

François: "To knock each other about for so long, if this is to be the ending."

There ensues a conversation between the two valets upon war and peace, till François hears the verses quoted from Victor Hugo:

Dawn flashes over the earth,
The world is full of the joy of larks,
At last, at long last, hatred sinks,
Defeated, into nothingness.

While the Party was meeting at Rüdesheim, Stresemann, favored by glorious autumn sunshine, was living through days of retrospection and recollection in the ancient vine-embowered "Krone" at Assmannshausen. The memory of the generations of poets who had lived and spent happy days there, combined with the romance and gayety of the Rhine, as he dreamed by the banks of the German river. Speeches like that which Stresemann delivered after the Party's dinner at Rüdesheim have unfortunately never been preserved. They are absent from the collection of his speeches and writings. Stimulated by his surroundings, Stresemann spoke on the

concept of enthusiasm, the concept of intoxication in Plato's sense. The speech was begotten of the moment, with all the strength and animation of spontaneous impulse. It culminated in reflections on how to intensify one's sense of being alive, one's enthusiasm for beauty and joy. That speech, together with others delivered in the space of a few days, give an idea of the width of Stresemann's spiritual and emotional sweep.

That sixth session of the German People's Party at Cologne was the most brilliant the Party had ever experienced. It was distinguished by the number and the names of those who took part, and filled by the knowledge that events had justified the Party against those whom Stresemann had described as the men of "the eternal yesterday." It was good to know that it had not taken upon itself the odium of unpopularity for nothing. The conference was also significant for Stresemann's great speech. He glanced back over the Party's political career, settled accounts with their opponents on the Right, whose prayer ran: "Give us this day our daily illusion!" and warned these would-be saviours of the State that they were not strengthening the Republic by exaggerating the dangers she ran, and that deeds alone could win the respect and confidence of the Ger-

man people. By that speech Stresemann silenced all those who doubted whether, after advocating a popular Empire during the days of the revolution, he had really become reconciled to the republican form. All doubts were silenced before the services he had rendered the Republic and the concern he had shown to preserve for the Constitution the respect and honor it deserved.

The opposition of the German Nationals to Stresemann's policy continued. Its result was that the Social Democrats considered their support in Parliament indispensable, and thus led to a crisis in December which brought about the fall of the Cabinet. The political situation thus created surprised in its final outcome both the Social Democrats and the German Nationals. In order to prove to the Social Democrats that they were not indispensable, negotiations were started with the German Nationals, who on their part were anxious to join the Government. Stresemann was in opposition to the Nationals, but had never felt any hostility towards them. His ever-present ideal was national unity, and just as he had endeavored at the outset of his political career to reconcile the Social Democrats with the Reich so he now welcomed the renewed hope of participation by the German Nationals in the

Government. This meant that they were thereby giving up their purely negative opposition, and assuming the obligations of practical service to the Republic. The negotiations were unsatisfactory in detail, and clumsily conducted by the opposing side. When Graef-Thüringen was proposed as Minister of Justice—one of those men whose antagonism to the idea of national unity surpasses the limits of ordinary opposition—Stresemann intervened. At the great ball of the Berlin Press Association he decided to make Graef's membership of the Government a cabinet question, and wrote the same evening to the Reich Chancellor that he would resign his office if the German National People's Party persisted in the affront thus offered. Graef was not appointed.

Stresemann was blamed by the Left for agreeing to the inclusion of the German Nationals in the Cabinet at all, for he was thereby endangering the continuance of his foreign policy. If anything, the contrary is true. Stresemann explained in a long letter to the Reich Chancellor Marx, under what conditions it would be possible for him to collaborate with the German Nationals, and the fact that the Nationals were asked, before joining the Government, to give their formal ad-

hesion to the Republican state-form and to the policy of Geneva and Locarno, gave a broader basis to his policy, both at home and abroad. It was now established that that policy—even though in varying degrees—was supported by every party, from the German Nationals to the Social Democrats.

The beginning of the new year was marked by a dispute concerning literary history. Wolfgang Goetz's drama "Neidhardt von Gneisenau" had brought Stresemann into the lists. He was offended by the presentation of historical characters belonging to the time of Germany's revival, a hundred years ago. He feared that the human and historical fame of the great Germans of the period between Jena and Vienna might be obscured. This dispute was over the posthumous historical fame and the personal good name of the heroes of the wars of liberation, especially Blücher. Stresemann had always favored historical periods of budding and growth: 1848, the years when Bismarck, after his dismissal, was indicating new ways of parliamentary development for Germany, and the period from Jena to the Vienna Congress. He had become specially absorbed, during recent years, in the epoch of the Prussian revival, less for its military importance,

than with a view to studying the intellectual, economic and constitutional development, the struggles of the great minds, the fight of the reformers Stein, Hardenberg, Blücher and Scharnhorst against the Conservatives.

An address Stresemann delivered on the Prussian reformers, before the Reich Club of the German People's Party, and two essays in the *Deutsche Stimmen,* entitled "Neidhardt von Gneisenan" and, "The King, Gneisenan and Blücher," met with great approval from the public, for they indicated historical and human parallels between past and present. For although he dealt carefully with the historical and scientific facts on which his subject was based, Stresemann lifted the matter on to the universal plane of human and political truth. The dispute with Goetz centered round one of Stresemann's favorite figures, Blücher. Stresemann had been deeply offended by Goetz's attack on the Fieldmarshal as a man. "If we are going to judge other men with the same moral censoriousness, then there might be one or two things in Goethe's life which would cause the puritans to shudder. Goethe was not only the embodiment of Faust; he was the embodiment of both Faust and Mephistopheles. Nature has not created the human

race with the angels on one side and the devils on the other. Every man has in him both angelic and devilish aptitudes, and the fight between them is the meaning of life. 'What to human eyes does not plainly appear—there dwells One above to Whom it is clear';[1] those words were spoken by Ernst von Wildenbruch, and that conception, which reproduces what is best in Christian philosophy, seems to me finer than a self-sufficiency that dwells on the failings in other men's characters."

The human and political reflections it contains —though rarely expressed in words—give a special value to the essay "Goethe and the Wars of Liberation," which was based on an address delivered in the previous year at Heidelberg. He gives a description of Prussia after Jena, when she behaved so humbly and submissively that Russian officers asked whether it was worth while to conclude an alliance with such a people. Napoleon rejected Prussia as unfit for an alliance, and she showed no signs of rising against her oppressors. The description invites one to draw a parallel with present-day conditions, and leaves one wondering whether the Germany of to-day,

[1] "Was Menschenaugen nicht fassen noch sehn, dort oben wohnt einer, der wird es verstehn."

compared with the Prussia of 1806 to 1813, presents so humble an aspect and bows the neck so low, as the Nationalists are pleased to represent.

When does Stresemann find the time for these historical and literary studies? They are his recreation. His occupation with the great intellects of the past and with the great epochs of history is the mental refreshment which he needs to recover from the conflicts he wages on the low level of every-day politics. No portrait of Stresemann would be complete without a picture of him seated in the lecturer's chair at the Bühnen-Klub, surrounded by artists and scholars, discussing the problems of Goethe, endeavoring to prove that there ought to be a Third Part to "Wilhelm Meister," and hinting as to its whereabouts.

When Stresemann sits in a crowd of artists, and the talk goes on, fine, full of humor and satire, without distinction of person, he is one of the most lovable of men. Paul Morgan once concluded his remarks with the words: "I can understand Stresemann being opposed on political grounds but the 'Stresemann-problem' for me is how any one can fail to love him as a man."

Two great speeches were made by Stresemann when honors were conferred on him. One was

the award of the "Deutscher Ring" by the Foreign Institute for his promotion of culture among Germans in foreign lands; the other, which preceded it, was the award of the Nobel Prize, which was given to Stresemann, Chamberlain and Briand for their successful efforts on behalf of peace. The fact that, eight years after the Peace of Versailles, which was to brand the Germans forever as barbarians and the originators of the war, this high distinction should have been awarded by an impartial, foreign committee to the Foreign Minister of the German Reich, as one of the leaders of the peace movement in the world, was a tremendous success. It was a success for German foreign policy, a forward step in the prestige of the German Reich, which, only a few years previously, no German would have dreamed of. Yet, at the time, the Nobel Prize award was not sufficiently appreciated in Germany itself.

On June 29th, 1927, Stresemann, in accordance with the regulations of the Storthing Nobel Committee, delivered in the University hall at Oslo his great address on "The Path of the New Germany." It dealt with questions of nationalism and internationalism. Stresemann expressed his belief that the highest in man can only develop from the gifts he receives from his own people,

the qualities of blood and nationality. Nevertheless a man's experience must go beyond what is peculiar to his own people; he must know the great trend of universal knowledge and universal sentiment. His enthusiasm for humanity must crown his enthusiasm for his native land.

The address gave a retrospective account of the struggles for a peaceful development in Europe: "Words are not always immediately followed by deeds in the history of the nations. History measures by other standards than the lives of individual men. Man is too readily inclined to apply his own standard to the development of history. In the past we have seen terrific storms; we have seen confidence budding but blighted by distrust and the war mentality. At present we see a phase of confidence in the development of peace, rather than a unanimous affirmation by all the peoples of the earth."

"The Path of the New Germany" was the title of the address. Stresemann wishes to take with him upon that path the memory of the great deeds of German history, for though the line of evolution now runs in a different direction, though the work of statesmen is directed towards the avoidance of wars and the fostering of a peaceful common life among the peoples, the essential thing

in the great deeds of history is the self-dedication of individuals to the good of the State. That is why Stresemann demands a just estimate of German mentality. "France declares in all the speeches of her statesmen that she is a country of Peace, that she regards Peace as the great ideal of mankind. Yet France has her Arc de Triomphe, and a splendid monument honors the memory of Napoleon I. Why, then, all this excitement when wreaths are laid in Germany on the monument to Frederick the Great? Why should not we be edified at the sacrifices made by our manhood in defense of hearth and home, of wife and child, on the blood-soaked soil of Germany, which has suffered more from the ravages of war than any other country? In every land the memory lives of the defeat of would-be conquerors. Here in Norway you sing of the death of the mighty man who tried to shake the independence of this land. In every man lives the memory of the battles and great moments of the past These memories are not incompatible with a love of peace for the future. The man who has led a life of storm and struggle, appreciates most deeply a time of rest and peace."

Stresemann could truly point out at Oslo that the majority of the German people were united

in support of his peace policy. Later, the faculties of Philosophy and Law of the University of Heidelberg conferred upon him a doctorate *honoris causa,* in recognition of his work for peace. One is safe in assuming that there had been some discussion among the scholars as to whether Stresemann's policy was an episode born of the needs of the day, or the beginning of a new epoch in history.

The first year after Germany's entry into the League of Nations witnessed exciting days at Geneva. Peace was threatened more than once in the east. The torch of war might have been lighted in some part of Europe, and resulted in a new world conflagration. It is due to some extent to Germany's intercession, in her ancient rôle of mediator between east and west, that war was prevented, and the peoples in the east settled their quarrels peacefully.

The World Economic Conference pointed a path into the future. Stresemann undertook the report on the results and demands of the economists. He did so, fully appreciating the importance which the World Economic Conference, with its efforts to find an economic balance and international system would have on the political development of the nations. If economics aims

at the gradual abolition of tariff walls and a closer economic linking of the nations with one another, it thereby lays the foundation for political and spiritual reconciliation.

The fact that not all the budding dreams of Lake Maggiore came to fruition during the first year of Germany's membership of the League of Nations, emboldens many a Loki [2] in Germany to speak and write maliciously of the "breakdown" of Stresemann's policy. Germany has recently proved that she is an important, nay an indispensable factor in the common life of the nations, and that the other states must make concessions to her in their own interests.

The year brought the Franco-German Commercial Treaty, the first commercial treaty ever concluded between the German Reich and France, and thus a closer union between the two countries.

By his two speeches at the end of January, 1928, Stresemann started the great debate as to the future form of Franco-German relations. He demanded a logical development of the Locarno treaties. When Stresemann pointed out that France was only branding herself as a hypocrite by signing peace treaties and trying at the same

[2] A god of Norse legend who sided with the evil principle against good.

time to base herself on military might, when he asked whether France was not satisfied with England's guarantee, as a security of peace, the public opinion of the world was on his side.

The reply from Paris was the demand for the extension of the Conversation of Thoiry. The intention at Thoiry had been to put finis to post-war military and financial policy, to clear the ground for the building-up of a new Europe.

The German people under Stresemann's foreign policy is heading towards new and serious difficulties, but a glance at what has been achieved gives courage to face the future.

Let us remember Goethe's words: "We belong to a race which aspires from darkness into light."

THE END

INDEX

Agriculture, proportion of population engaged in, 45
Allies, war interests of, 106
America, war results achieved by, 115; fighting forces of, 129
Andreas Realgymnasium, Stresemann's curriculum in, 10 *f.*
Archduke Francis Ferdinand, assassination of, 89; Stresemann's reaction to, 90
Army Bill, Stresemann helps to pass, 65 *f.*
Association of German Chocolate Manufacturers, Stresemann appointed manager of, 34, 35
Association of Saxon Industrialists, progress of, 40 *f.*; foundation of, by Stresemann, 41 *f.*, 51, 53 *f.*
Austria, German, union of Germany with, 163 *f.*

Balance of power, attempts to stabilize, 368
Balance of trade, depression of, 47; restoration of, 47
Bassermann, 57, 62; conception of government of, 63; Stresemann's letters to, 85; Stresemann praised by, 86, 92; Bethmann's dislike of, 113, 121, 124; death of, 134 *f.*, 155
Bavaria, opposition to Stresemann of, 214; situation in, 215 *f.*; danger from, 217; Stresemann's attitude toward, 217 *f.*; food supply in, 218; separation movement in, 218, 221
Belgium, Stresemann on nationality of, 136; German negotiations with, 293
Berlin, pessimistic atmosphere in, 141
Berlin Treaty, 284; Stresemann on, 285
Bethmann-Hollweg, 96, 127; Stresemann's criticism of speeches of, 108 *f.*; 110; Stresemann's opinion of, 113 *f.*; 116; Stresemann's attack on, 129; resignation of, 130
Bismarck, speech of, at Jena, 25; Stresemann quotes, 45; influence of, on political speeches, 46; Stresemann compared to, 97, 245
Blücher, Stresemann's defense of, 305
Boston, Stresemann visits, 86 *f.*
Bottled beer trade, development of, Stresemann's thesis on, 2, 3, 30, 31
Briand, 264, 267 *f.*; quoted, 279 *f.*; 298, 299; Nobel prize awarded to, 308
Bücher, Karl, 30 and *n.*
Bülow, Prince, Reichstag dissolved by, 58; quoted, 60, 64; defeat of, 72; Stresemann advocates appointment

of, as Chancellor, 130; defeat of, by Kaiser, 131
Bureaucracy, effects of, 114
Burgfrieden, Stresemann's plea for, 111
Burschenschaft, 20; Reform, 21, 25; Stresemann elected chairman of his, 29; Stresemann's youthful defense of, 178

Cabinet, Stresemann's, importance of, 207
Canada, Stresemann makes study tour of, 87
Capelle, judgment of, regarding American fighting forces, 129
Censorship, military, evil of, 109 *f.*
Central Executive party, Stresemann chairman of, 135
Central Union of German Industries, formation of, in 1876, 36; influence of, over Government, 37
Clemenceau, quoted, 93 *f.;* 102, 110, 139
Coalition, right of workers to, 77
Cologne, Stresemann's speech to students at, 294
Colonies, Stresemann on support of, 95
Colonial politics, 66 *ff.*
Communism, ideals of, 186 *f.;* Germany near brink of, 195
Communist State, plans for formation of, 218, 219
Communists, power of, in Saxony, 218; opposition of, to Stresemann, 238
Constitution, rejection of, 177 *f.;* Stresemann's plans for, 179, 188, 196
Coöperation, Stresemann urges industrial, 38 *f.*
Crown Prince, return to Germany of, 236
Cuno, policy of, Stresemann's rumored opposition to, 204 *f.;* weakness of, 205; Stresemann demanded as successor to, 206; passive resistance policy of, 211; quoted, 212, 223; demands of, 234; mortgage offers of, 255, 270
Currency, German, depreciation of, 213; Stresemann on stabilization of, 213 *f.;* stabilization of, 219, 221, 233
Curriculum vitæ, 11, 16, 18; quoted, 14 *f.*

D'Abernon, Lord, 223; French description of, 235; advice of, 270
Dawes, Plan of, 201, 235
Dawes Report, acceptance of, 247; summary of, 254 *f.;* Stresemann on, 256, 261 *f.;* result of acceptance of, 265 *ff.;* 269 *f.*
Delbrück, 187
"Deutscher Ring," Stresemann awarded, 308
Deutsche Stimmen, Stresemann in, 140 *ff.;* 143 f.; 145 *ff.,* 153, 171, 177, 305
Deutsche Tageszeitung; quoted, 239
Deutsche Zeitung, quoted 283
Die Zeit, Stresemann establishes, 223; importance of, 230; quoted, 231
Dorpal, University of, 138
Dresden, Town Council of, Stresemann elected to, 54

Ebert, 152; Stresemann on, 163; opposition to, 220
Emperor, abdication of, 152
Employees' Association, Stresemann honorary member of, 82
England, war aims of, 100 *f.*; production of munitions in, 114; war results achieved by, 115; parliamentary methods of, 182, 223
Erzberger Peace Resolution, 127
Essays, subjects of Stresemann's, 83, 104 *f.*; 164
Eupen-Malmédy, restitution of, 293
Europe, common destinies of peoples of, 241

Faber, Chaplain, religious influence of, on Stresemann, 15 *f.*
Faith, religious, Stresemann's statement of, 16
Fehrenbach, Peace Treaty speech of, 175
Fichte, Stresemann quotes, 176
First Chamber of the Diet, members of, 49 *f.*; government bill for reform of, 51; disappearance of, 52; defeat of bill for reform of, 52
Food, shortage of, 110, 157, 218 *f.*
Foreign Minister, Stresemann as, 201, 264 *ff.*
Foreign policy, Stresemann's, 196 *f.*; future difficulties of, 313
Franc, Poincaré's attempts to stabilize, 298
France, war aims of, 99; oppression of, 212; power of, in 1923, 219; financial demands of, on Germany, 225 *ff.*; German conflict with, 252 *f.*; stabilization of military power of, 267
Franco-German Commercial Treaty, 312
Frederick the Great, quoted, 140
Freemasonry, Stresemann recognizes standards of, 28; Stresemann charged with, 248
Freiligrath, Stresemann's fondness for lyrics of, 12
French, German treatment of, 179 *f.*
French Yellow Book, 226, 229
Friedrich, Kommerzienrat, quoted, 41
Fritsch, Teodor, opposition of, to Hansa League, 73 *f.*

Geibel, quoted, 5
General German University Gazette, Stresemann contributor to, and editor of, 29
Geneva, failure of negotiations at, 291
Geneva Protocol, 275, 288; failure of, 269
German Democratic Party, foundation of, 170; program of, 170
German National Party, 187, 224; opposition of, to Stresemann, 302
German People's Party, National Liberal Party renamed, 170; success of, 171; Peace Treaty rejected by, 176; importance of, 184; endorsement of, by Stinnes and Vögler, 185; political power

of, 186, 187, 201, 238; 1924 defeat of, 258; sixth session of, 301; Stresemann's speech at, 301 *f.*
German Society for World Trade, objects of, 89
German Union for the Protection of Industry, foundation of, 79; growth of, 79
Germans, treatment of, by Poles and French, 180
Germany, war aims of, 104; financial policy of, 112; post-war revival of, 167, 203 *f.*; Communism in, 218, 219; political aims of, Stresemann on, 226 *ff.*; rehabilitation of, 252; Belgian negotiations with, 293
Goethe, Stresemann quotes, 154, 185; Stresemann compared to, 192, 260, 286; Stresemann's essay on, 306; quoted, 313
Goethe and Napoleon, Stresemann's address on, 191
Goetz, Wolfgang, dispute over play by, 304; Stresemann's essay on, 305; attack on Blücher by, 305
Government, parliamentary, adoption of, 155
Graef-Thüringen, opposition of, to national unity, 303

Hanover, Stresemann's speech at, 257
Hansa League, inclusion of workers in, 72; Stresemann's speech to, at Dresden, 72, 73; rapid growth of membership of, 75
Hartleben, Otto Erich, quoted, 9, 193
Haussmann, Stresemann's reply to, 173 *f.*
Heidelberg, University of, doctorate conferred on Stresemann by, 311
Helfferich, "rye-mark" proposed by, 221
Herriot, Poincaré succeeded by, 259
Herwegh, quoted, 5, 6, 24, 66
Hilger, quoted, 237
History, Stresemann's interpretation of, 191; research in, 191; enjoyment of, 307
Hitler, Stresemann contrasted to, 98; watchword of, 216
Holz, Arno, quoted, 8
Home Office Vote, Stresemann on, 76
Houghton, Ambassador, 235
Hugo, Victor, quoted, 300
Hussong, Friederich, tribute of, to Stresemann, 239

Imperial Finance Reform, 68, 69; opposition to, 69 *f.*; Stresemann on, 70 *f.*
Imperial Insurance Act, object of, 81
Industrial policy, Stresemann's essays on, 83
Industry, protection of German, 37
International Chambers of Commerce, Congress of, Stresemann attends, 86 *f.*
International Law, 128

Kaiser William II, Stresemann's defense of, 158 *f.*, 176
Kapp *Putsch*, 194, 268
Kinkel, speech of, on unity, 179
Kleefeld, Käthe, Stresemann marries, 61

Kriel, Dr., influence of, on Stresemann's life, 30
Krupp, imprisonment of, 211
Kühlmann, Stresemann's attack on, 140
Küster, Konrad, Reform Burschenschaften founded by, 21

Lassalle, passive resistance policy of, 210, 211
League of Landowners, 53, 62, 73, 75
League of Nations, Germany's part in, 180; basis for Germany's entry into, 281 *f.*, 291, 292; Germany's admission to, 296; Stresemann on, 296
Lensch, Paul, working-class movement championed by, 25 *f.*
Liberalism, German, division of, 169
Lingner, Stresemann's appreciation of, 193
Liszt, Friedrich, railway system plan of, 43
Literature, Stresemann's taste in, 4, 12, 13 *f.*; effect of, on Stresemann's speeches, 97; Stresemann's enjoyment of, 307
Lloyd George, Stresemann's appraisal of, 102 *f.*; 110, 114, 144, 269, 298
Locarno Conference, difficulties of, 278; German demands at, 279; importance of, 279; treaties signed at, 279 *f.*; success of, 281; Russia's hostility toward, 283 *f.*
Locarno treaties, signing of, 285 *ff.*; Stresemann demands development of, 312
London, Locarno treaties signed at, 285 *ff.*
London Ultimatum, 199 *ff.*; questions on, 200
Lossaw, General von, allegiance of, to Bavaria, 215; dismissal of, by Reich, 216
Ludendorff, Stresemann's defense of, 159
Lüttwitz, General von, Berlin in hands of, 194
Lyncæus, quoted, 193

Mannesmann incident, 68
März, Dr., quoted, 40
"Masonry and the Uplifting of Humanity," Stresemann's essay on, 29
March Rebellion, 24 *n.*
Marx, Stresemann's policy endorsed by, 261; Stresemann's letter to, 303
Max, Prince of Baden, Imperial Chancellor, 151 *f.*
Medical profession, Stresemann incurs enmity of, 83 *f.*
Michaelis, appointment of, as Chancellor, 131; Stresemann's opinion of, 131, 132
Mond, Sir Alfred, quoted, 101
Morgan, Paul, Stresemann described by, 307
Mussolini, attack of, on Germany, 287; diplomatic defeat of, 288 *f.*

Napoleon, Stresemann's interpretation of, 192
National Assembly, Stresemann addresses, 172
National Liberal Party, Stresemann's attack on, 57; support of government by, 62, 64; convention of, 82, 112, 113; consistent policy of, 139,

155; construction of old, 167 *f.*
National Social Party, Stresemann joins, 56; ideals of, 56; Stresemann leaves, 56
Nobel Prize, Stresemann, Chamberlain and Briand awarded, 308

Oslo, Stresemann's speech at, 308 *ff.*

Parliament, Stresemann's struggle to increase influence of, 93; function of, 185
Peace, Stresemann's condition for, 106; Germany's efforts for, 311
Peace aims, Germany's victorious, 135; Stresemann's 1917, 135
Peace Treaty, Stresemann's speech on, 174 *ff.*; Stresemann's apprehension concerning, 173; rejection of, 176; Stresemann's note on, 270 *f.*
Peace of Brest-Litowsk, 137; Stresemann's view of, 139
Poincaré, 225 *f.*; Ruhr policy of, 231 *f.*; fall of, 259; failure of Rhineland plan of, 262, 263, 292, 293; stabilization efforts of, 298
Poland, Kingdom of, 127, 137; France aids, 267
Poles, German treatment of, 179 *f.*
Politics, Stresemann on, 243
Posadowsky, Count, 187
Potsdam, spirit of, 171
"Protestant Orthodoxy," Stresemann's essay on, 27
Press, German, use of by Allies, 109, 110
Prussia, right of secession from, 181

Quaatz, attack of, on Stresemann, 256

Rathenau, Walther, Stresemann's opposition to, 164; economic views of, 165, 166; policy of, 201 *ff.*
Reichsbank, success of, 221
Reichstag, Stresemann elected to, 54; takes seat in, 61; dissolution of, by Prince Bülow, 58; Stresemann's first important speech in, 76; Stresemann's reëlection to, 92; Stresemann's famous speech in, 119 *ff.*
Rentenmark, 221, 233
Reparations, France's struggle for, 252 *f.*; meeting of Commission on, 234 *ff.*
Republic, German, proclamation of, 152; Stresemann supports, 157; West, menace of a, 181
Reventlow, Count, quoted, 246, 247
Revolution, first signs of, 151; riot of, 156; Stresemann's opposition to, 158
Rhineland, Stresemann on freedom of, 230; failure of Poincaré's plans for, 262; danger of continued occupation of, 270
Riesser, Dr., proposition of, 168
Rösicke, Dr., Stresemann finds ally in, 237 *f.*
Rüdesheim, Stresemann's speech at, 300 *f.*

Ruhr, liberation of, 201; occupation of, 202; collapse of struggle for, 210; industrial situation in, 210 *f.*; France in, 210 *f.*, 232; German expenditures for, 213, 219, 222; England's verdict on invasion of, 223; importance of, to Germany, 231; evacuation of, 262 *ff.*
Russia, war aims of, 100; revolution in, 137; German attitude toward, 283
"Rye-mark," 221
Saxon Industry, Stresemann editor of, 83
Saxony, factories in, 33, 34 *f.*; organization of industry in, 42, 43; Communists in, 218; Stresemann's policy in, 220
Schacht, *rentenmark* proposed by, 221
Schiedemann, observation of on Peace Treaty, 173, 175; Stresemann quotes, 174
Schiffer, 194, 195
Schönaich-Carolath, Prince von, 153
Schwerin-Loewitz, Count, Stresemann on death of, 153 *f.*
Seas, freedom of, 136 *f.*
Second Chamber of the Diet, reform of, 52
Securities, foreign, German holdings of, 44
Separatists, Rhenish, origin of, 212
Social Democrats, defeat of Stresemann by, 86, 189; Saxon policy of, 220; desertion of Stresemann by, 225
Social insurance, Stresemann's description of, 81
Socialism, State, opposed by Stresemann, 95
"Societies for Compensation in the Event of Strikes," Stresemann's address on, 79
Socrates, Stresemann quotes, 153 *f.*
Songs, student, Stresemann edits collection of, 20
Soviet Government, 138
Spielhagen, Friedrich, influence of, on Stresemann, 13
Stinnes, People's Party endorsed by, 185
Stresemann, Gustav, birth of, May 10, 1878, 1; youthful taste in reading, 4; creed of, 16; marriage of, 61; sons of, 61; growth of political power of, 92; eloquence of, 93 *f.*, 96, 98; optimism of, 191, 244 *f.*; political aim of, 209; accomplishments during Chancellorship of, 236; quoted, on Locarno Conference, 280 *f.*
Strike, general, ordered by Government, 194
Submarine warfare, Stresemann advocates, 128; International law on, 128

Thoiry, conference at, 298, 299; France demands extension of conversation of, 313
Thyssen, imprisonment of, 211
Trade, German, England's warfare against, 101
Trade Unions, growth of, 78 *f.*; risk of, in striking, 80, 134
Tyrol, German difficulty in, 287, 289

Ukraine, object of peace with, 139
Ulk, cartoon of Stresemann in, 105
Union for the Protection of Industry, Stresemann's speech to, 77 *f.*
United States, Stresemann makes study tour of, 87; Germany's economic war with, 129; withdrawal of, from European affairs, 255; war decided by, 255 *f.*; renewed interest of, in European affairs, 262
University of Berlin, Stresemann at, 19 *ff.*
Upper Silesia, Germany's hope of saving, 199 *ff.*

Versailles, Treaty of, Stresemann's attitude towards, 197 *f.*; reparations clauses in, 226, 252; war guilt paragraph of, 276

Vitzthun, Count, Association lauded by, 54
Vögler, People's Party endorsed by, 185
von Hindenburg, Stresemann supported by, 283
von Rodenberg, Colonel, defense of Stresemann by, 282 *f.*
von Wildenbruch, Ernst, Stresemann quotes, 306

War, Stresemann on preparation for, 59 *f.*; premonition of, 90; effect of, on trade, 91; Stresemann's explanation of the, 99 *ff.*; Stresemann's doubt of outcome of, 102, 103; organization of, 155; Stresemann's hopes for German victory in, 162; effect of, on German people, 207; propaganda in, 252; cost of, 258
War aims, discussion of, forbidden, 127
War guilt, Stresemann on, 275 *f.*
War indemnity, 198 *f.*
War profits, taxation of, 112
"Weimar Diary," tribute to Goethe in, 192
Werdau, Stresemann's speech to workers at, 189
Westarp, Count, Stresemann described by, 208, 239
Wilson, Stresemann meets, in America, 87; intervention policy of, 129; Fourteen Points of, 146; reply of, to peace offer, 148; peace terms suggested by, 162, 173; appearance of, at Versailles, 255
Wirth, Imperial Chancellor, policy of, 199, 201 *ff.*

Zeppelin, Stresemann's first trip on, 84; description of, 84 *f.*

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